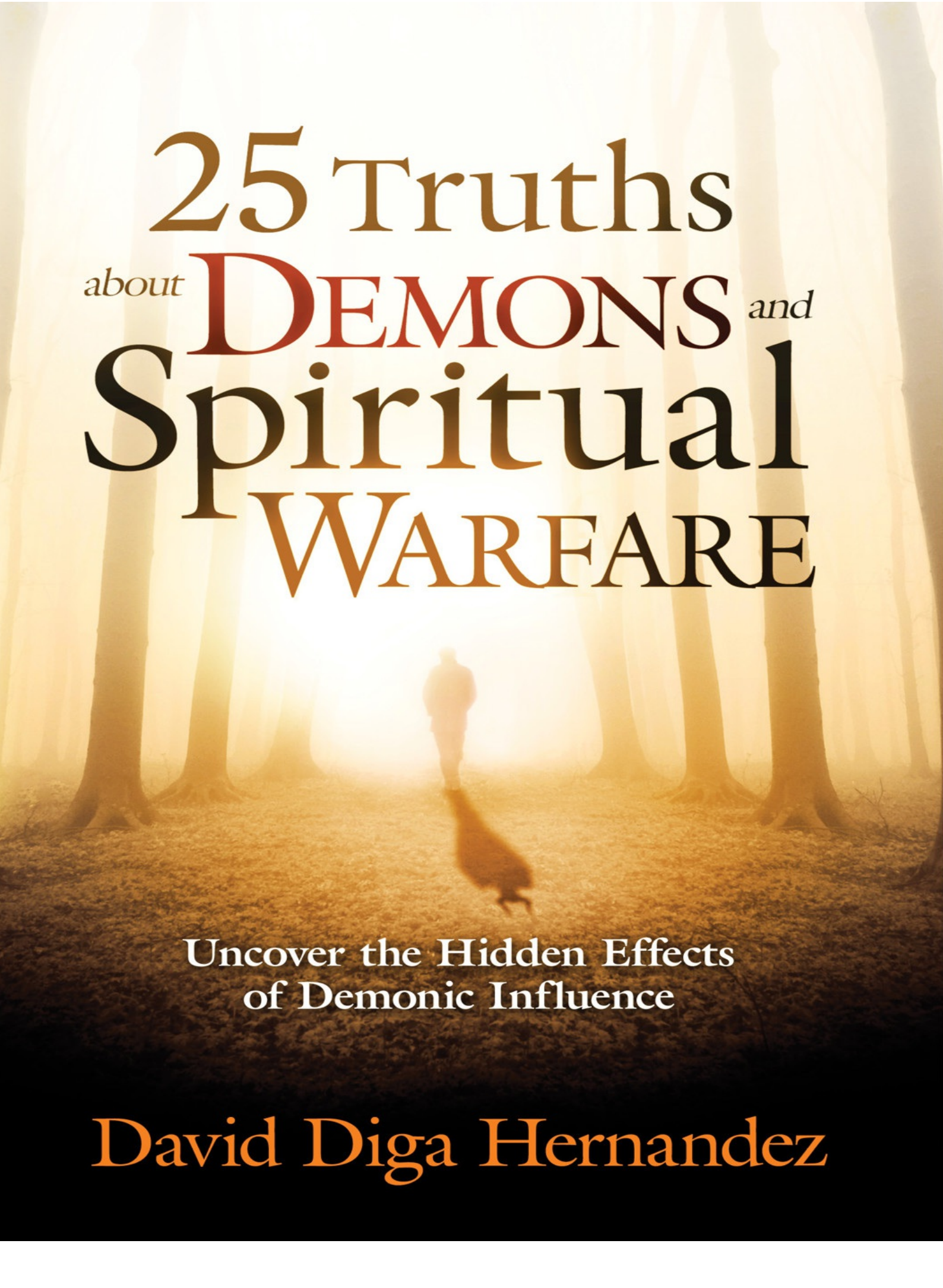
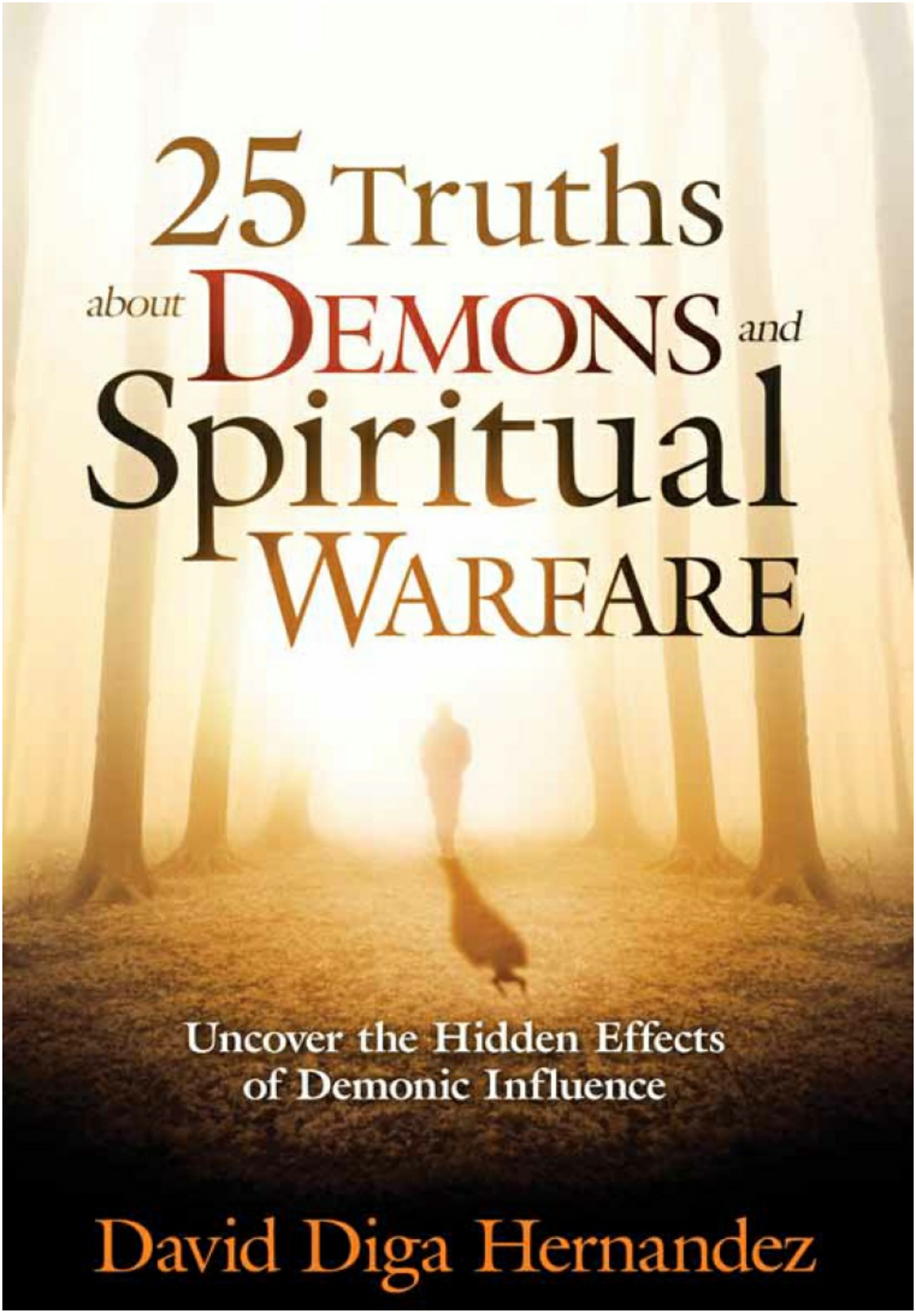

25 Truths
about DEMONS and
Spiritual
WARFARE
Uncover the Hidden Effects
of Demonic Influence
David Diga Hernandez


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The more I get to know David Hernandez, the more I see him as a next-generation Christian leader who is determined to reach his generation with the gospel and the truth of God's Word.

—Matt Crouch
Chairman, Trinity Broadcasting Network

David Hernandez represents the best in a new generation of leaders and influencers. Though young in age, he carries himself like a seasoned sage. He has served and observed the great leaders in the body of Christ. I know few who have accomplished more at such a young age. David's personal character exceeds his extraordinary giftedness. I consider him a friend.

—Phil Munsey
Chairman, Champions Network,
an Outreach of Joel Osteen Ministries

David Hernandez stands as one of the most anointed emerging voices in the kingdom. He personifies both a Caleb-type anointing to conquer and posses in addition to an Elisha-type grace for double-portion signs and wonders. Through David's ministry, an entire generation will experience the power of a living

God!

—Rev. Dr. Samuel Rodriguez
President, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC/CONELA)
Hispanic Evangelical Association/
LatinoEvangelicals.com

"For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). Today's millennial generation is destined to shape the future of our world. In no other era of history has the youth culture been more idolized and radicalized. In the Bible's hall of fame are the youthful heroes Joseph, Samuel, David, Solomon, the three Hebrew children, John the Baptist, and young Timothy. Superseding the list is Jesus, who at twelve years old dialogued with the leaders of the synagogue.

Another young man, David Hernandez, has been sovereignly sent, chosen, and empowered to connect with this generation. I've had the opportunity to spend valuable time with him, pouring into his life some of the things I have learned in my seventy-five years of ministry. Although we are several generations apart, David and I both were called and

started preaching at age thirteen.

David is in demand as a speaker at conferences and healing crusades. He also hosts a TV program with a worldwide viewership and has authored several books. David's anointed communication coupled with his relaxed style of preaching gives him a link to relate to a diverse audience. Now at the young age of twenty-seven he has a remarkable future to fulfill.

—Dr. Ralph Wilkerson
Founding Pastor, Melodyland,
Anaheim, California

The Bible says that we are not to be ignorant of the enemy's devices. The devil can only take advantage of us to the degree that we are ignorant. This book has the potential to cure ignorance concerning the devices the enemy uses against believers. When we remove the ignorance, we take our advantage back. Many of the books that I've read on demons and demonology tend to leave the idea that demon power is a worthy opponent against God. But when you consider the victory that Jesus provided for us at the cross, there is no need to be impressed or terrified by our adversary.

David not only exposes the methods the enemy uses to enter our lives, he also outlines concrete strategies to outrun the devices of the enemy by acting on the Word and following the Spirit. Many of us are guilty of thinking wrong concerning the devil and how he works. This book dispels myths and imparts truth. It's a great read for anyone who desires to become more skillful with their authority in Christ.

—MARCUS TANKARD
PASTOR, MUSICIAN, AUTHOR
STAR OF THE HIT REALITY TV SERIES *THICKER THAN WATER*

The apostle Paul made it clear in his letter to the church at Ephesus that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12, KJV). Just a glance at the evening news will tell you that the proliferation of evil in our world is accelerating, but God has not left us defenseless. He has given us His Word, which says "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4). In

25 Truths About Demons and Spiritual Warfare David unpacks for us why it is important to know what or whom we are up against so we can fight effectively with the weapons God has given us.

—Jim Cernero
Revivalist, Author, and Healing and Worship Minister,
Certain Sound Ministries

There has never been a greater hour than right now to understand our enemy. Through solid biblical teaching and spiritual insight, David Diga Hernandez exposes the strategies and tactics of Satan, the demonic realm, and the kingdom of darkness. This book is a clear call to overcome the enemy through effective and anointed spiritual warfare. It's time to tear down strongholds and destroy the works of the devil!

—Ken Brown
Host, *The Empowering Word*
Pastor, Spirit & Life International Ministries
San Jose, California

David Diga Hernandez

25 Truths about DEMONS and Spiritual WARFARE

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While the author has made every effort to provide accurate Internet addresses at the time of publication, neither the publisher nor the author assumes any responsibility for errors or for changes that occur after publication.

For my nephew Liam Michael Hernandez

Contents

Introduction

PART I
ORIGINS AND ORDER
UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENEMY

1 Demons Exist
2 Satan Was an Angel
3 Satan Desires Dominion
4 Demons Are Not Fallen Angels
5 Demons Are Nephilim
6 Demons Possess Human Bodies
7 Demons Cannot Possess Believers
8 Demons Want to Build Their Kingdom
9 Demons Have Limitations

10 Demons Are Tormented by God's Presence
11 Demons Organize
12 Demons Strategize

PART II
OPERATIONS
EXPOSING AND RESISTING YOUR ENEMY

13 Demons Look for Open Doors
14 Demons Deceive
15 Demons Accuse
16 Demons Tempt
17 Demons Distract
18 Demons Intimidate
19 Demons Depress
20 Demons Sometimes Succeed
21 Demons Want to Destroy Your Faith

PART III
OPPOSITION
DEFEATING YOUR ENEMY

22 Demons Are Not to Be Feared
23 Demons Can't Penetrate the Armor of God
24 Demons Must Obey the Believer
25 Demons Must Submit to God's Word

Conclusion
Appendix: Answers to Common Questions About Demons
Notes

Introduction

ARE YOU AWARE of what's around you at this very moment? Is it possible that there is someone or something that is doing everything it can to keep you from reading the rest of this book?

There seems to be a collective and global sense of ill, a vague impression deep in the back of the mind. It is a quiet insistence of this troubling idea: something is not quite right. Whether it is voiced emphatically or contemplated inwardly, almost everyone has come to realize that there is something wrong with the world.

Conflict is found in every strata of existence—national, personal, relational, emotional, mental, and spiritual. From the horrifying threat of worldwide terrorism to the raised, angry voices in an everyday home, we can see a destructive influence.

Most people wonder what that influence is. The believer has been given the answer. We know the world's fallen state has been cultivated by sin. But beyond the sinful choices people make, there is another very powerful, though often forgotten, evil force at work in this world. The ancients called them gods. The ignorant call them myths. But the Bible calls them demons.

While man bears the full responsibility for his own decisions, demonic beings play a part in the destruction of this world. Some scoff at the idea of their existence. Most ignore them altogether. But while the few who look for them search primarily in the obvious and the horrifying, demons do their most effective and deceptive work in the everyday, in the ordinary. They hide in the boring, the uninteresting. This is why we have been given this warning:

> Be sober and watchful, because your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.
>
> —1 PETER 5:8

We must be vigilant. We must be alert. Why? Because we have a very real, literal, hate-filled enemy.

Demonic beings could be, at this very moment,

influencing or attacking your health, your finances, your relationships, your ministry, your mind, your emotions, and even your reading of this very sentence.

As well versed as you may be in Scripture, you just might be surprised to learn exactly how the enemy is able to influence our lives. Even Peter, a personal disciple of Christ's, thought he was doing good when he was actually under the influence of Satan.

> From that time on, Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised on the third day. Then Peter took Him and began rebuking Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord! This shall not happen to You." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things that are of God, but those that are of men."
>
> —MATTHEW 16:21–23

Maybe you're a Spirit-filled believer who is curious about the strategies of the enemy. You know that by understanding your enemy, as in any war, you stand a better chance of defeating him. I have researched and studied the Bible to give you a guide that will help you to both recognize and defeat the attacks of the

enemy. And here's the truth: he may be attacking you where you least expect it. He may have been attacking you for a long time without you realizing it was him all along.

Do you lack peace in your mind? Are you filled with fear? Are you untrusting, angry, or somewhat paranoid? Has the enemy beaten you into a depression? Are the emotions you experience throughout your days primarily negative? Have you been yearning to be free of a sinful habit, a tormenting thought, or a self-defeating mind-set that you have been unable to overcome? Do you struggle to pray, worship, read the Bible, and live holy? Do you long for a fruitful and unencumbered walk with the Lord? Perhaps you're tormented by demonic beings.

If you want to be free, if you want to be informed, if you want to learn to spot the enemy in his camouflage among daily life, if you want to minister freedom to others, then embark on this spiritual journey with me. Let us cross the dangerous borders and by stealth means gather intelligence from behind enemy lines. Let's observe. Let's utterly defeat and remove the enemy's influence from your life. Then let us go into the enemy's camp and break other

captives free.

Take it all back—your peace, your joy, your family, your prayer life, your devotion to God's Word, your ministry.

Do you want freedom? Do you want understanding of the spiritual realm? Do you want to be able to minister deliverance to others? Then read on.

A WORD OF CAUTION

But first, please allow me to present this caution. The primary focus of the believer must never become demons, spiritual warfare, and the like. Our gaze must forever be firmly fixed and rightly centered upon the majestic countenance of Christ. To break the focus of that gaze would be to invite and ensure spiritual defeat. Demons bow their knees only to Jesus, and if they fail to see Christ in you, they will lack the proper motivation to follow any commands or declarations you may pronounce.

No matter how confident, emphatic, or daring a person may be in confronting evil spirits, if a personal connection with Jesus is lacking, demonic

beings will be emboldened to exercise their option to retaliate. We see an example of this in the Book of Acts:

> But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.
>
> —ACTS 19:13–16, NAS

The seven sons of Sceva were not recognized in hell because they were not connected to heaven, nor did they possess an understanding of the power of Jesus's name. Hell responds to those who are backed by heaven, and heaven backs those who are united with Christ. A strong personal relationship with Christ is crucial in itself, and it is the exclusive source of godly spiritual authority.

But while a relationship with Christ results in spiritual authority, not everyone who exercises spiritual authority has a relationship with Christ. We know it's possible for even those who do not know

Christ to cast out demons. In fact, some who have such ability will eventually be tossed away with the very demons they have expelled. Jesus tells us this:

> On judgment day many will say to me, "Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name." But I will reply, "I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws."
>
> —MATTHEW 7:22–23, NLT;
> SEE ALSO MARK 9:38–40

On first impression the verses in Matthew seem to contradict the verses in the Book of Acts. Why were the seven sons of Sceva unable to cast out demons without a connection to Christ while those in Matthew 7 were able to cast out demons even though Christ never knew them?

Well, I suspect the differing results have to do with the kind of demonic power at work or its ranking. It's also possible that there is an ungodly authority that one can gain over demonic beings. In fact, some members of the occult claim to have such power. Ungodly, sorcerous authority could be what the Pharisees were trying to accuse Christ of using (Luke 11:15).

However you might reconcile this minor puzzle,

please don't miss this important takeaway. There seem to be two extremes of spiritual authority that are cause for mindful reflection. The story of the seven sons of Sceva tells us of the importance of being rooted in Christ. Jesus's warning about the Day of Judgment teaches us to not measure our spirituality or salvation by the ability to perform miracles, expel demons, or the like. We must live out a healthy harmony, avoiding both spiritual ignorance (like the sons of Sceva) and supernatural obsession (like those in Matthew 7).

If we become too distracted on either front, we may be made to look foolish by demonic defiance or, worse, like those described in Matthew chapter 7, operate in some level of spiritual authority without ever knowing God. We must neither have a weak understanding of demons (demonology) nor be so preoccupied with deliverance ministry that we forget the eternal scope of the gospel.

The cure-all to these sorts of extremes is the beautiful simplicity of loving Jesus Himself. The priority of the believer is to love Jesus first. To have a love for Him that is greater than any other love would be the believer's greatest spiritual achievement. True spirituality is not measured by

how many demons we expel or how much we know about spiritual warfare. It is evident in the way we love our Savior.

We must maintain a healthy balance in our perception of demonic beings, avoid superstitious silliness, and remain focused on the essence of the gospel. Spiritual warfare is not the message of the gospel; it is simply a tool to aid in our delivery of the gospel. There are dynamics at work in our circumstances that are unrelated to demons. Not every negative situation, tragedy, or mishap is the result of a demonic assault.

Even Jesus, who imparted to us our unquestionable authority over demons, cautions against any form of obsession with spiritual warfare.

But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.

—LUKE 10:20, NLT

However, disclaimer noted, Jesus did, in fact, give us the authority to cast out and defeat demons. We have been given a divine enabling to command the forces of darkness.

These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They

will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages.

—MARK 16:17, NLT

So God certainly expects us to be involved in spiritual warfare, but said warfare must not become our focus. It is obvious that, to some degree, the believer is supposed to engage in certain levels of confrontation with demonic beings. Christ has laid upon us the responsibility to free the demonically possessed, drive out demons from positions of influence, and defeat the demonic beings that assault the call of God upon our own lives.

This book will remove the veil of darkness under which our enemy operates. Though my goal was to biblically answer as many questions as possible, I have avoided speculation beyond what can be inferred from Scripture. To leave such a sure and sound foundation as God's Word is to build upon unstable, dangerous ideas that may result in ruinous collapse. If Scripture does not detail a certain matter in particular, it can only mean that the matter is not crucial to our relationship with God or to our spiritual well-being. In short I will not be dogmatic on points where the Scripture is vague.

Especially when dealing with the demonic, there is

a heightened level of spiritual awareness that one must apply to his or her studious exploration. Demonic beings do not like to be exposed, and they are observant, always planning their next ambush. Truth is the safeguard against demonic attacks of all sorts. So to step away from the solid rock of truth would mean certain defeat. Because of that, expect that some questions will be left only partially answered and that many issues will remain open-ended, save for a reasonable amount of biblically based speculation. We will only delve as deeply into knowledge of the demonic as allowed by Scripture. This topic can be highly seductive, and demonic beings know what it takes to lure you beyond any point of safety.

So it is with deep reverence that I will tread delicately in answering various important questions. Who are these demonic beings? From where have they come? How do they affect the lives of everyday people? What are their tactics, strategies, and plans? Are demons organized?

In this book those questions and more will be biblically answered, logically explored, and practically applied to everyday life. My prayer is that this book will serve as a useful and strategic guide to help you

exercise your God-given authority over demons and their dominion. So long as spiritual warfare is kept in its proper place in your life, it will never become a distraction from your love for God. Neither will you find yourself aimlessly wandering on the grounds of the bizarre.

It is the living presence of God within you that utterly devastates the kingdom of darkness around you. Live your life focused on God's indwelling and abiding presence, for when the source of all light dwells within your very being, you will never again know what it is to live in darkness.

I separated this book into three unique sections:

1. Part I—Origins and Order: Understanding Your Enemy
2. Part II—Operations: Exposing and Resisting Your Enemy
3. Part III—Opposition: Defeating Your Enemy

The first section is about the agencies and nature of the kingdom of hell and its members. In it, I detail the intriguing origins and order of demonic beings.

The second section is about common attacks of the enemy. This is where you will learn how to

identify and resist the subtle assaults of hell. This will lead to personal victory in your life.

The third section is about how to defeat the enemy by becoming a threat to the kingdom of hell. This section will help you move beyond personal victory and to the place where you can affect the lives of those around you.

It is my prayer that you will become informed, inspired, and empowered through the reading of this book, as we together explore what the Bible tells us of the realm beyond our own and its evil inhabitants.

PART I

Origins and Order
Understanding Your Enemy

IN THIS SECTION we will piece together clues from Scripture to discover an epic celestial conflict. We will begin with the fall of a brilliant angelic being and then trace the twisted origins of strange creatures we now call demons. Not only will you learn the intriguing origins of Satan, fallen angels, and demons, but you will also come to understand the hierarchy and functions of the kingdom of darkness. In this way you will come to understand our enemy's nature.

1

Demons Exist

There is nothing beyond what you can see with your eyes or experience with your senses. It is foolish to think there is anything beyond this present, material world.

—**SATAN**

THE DEVIL WOULD like nothing more than for us to believe that what we see in the natural world is all

there is. He'd love for us to think the supernatural exists only in popular novels and TV shows. That is deception of the darkest and most dangerous sort.

The devil is real, and he is obsessed with your destruction. He leads an army of ancient, menacing beings that exist upon the plains of an unseen world and stalk about with malicious intent. Their goal is to cause chaos and ruin in your life. They have existed for longer than you have, and they are knowledgeable onlookers. Siphoning knowledge from man's history on the earth, they are wise, cunning, subtle, and highly deceptive. Over the course of eons they have amassed a unique treasury of wisdom. And though they see through hate-filled eyes, demons have observed keenly enough to understand the weaknesses of men.

I cannot remember a time when I was not aware of the spiritual realm. I became a born-again Christian when I was eleven years old, but at the age of seven I had already begun to have vivid encounters with both the heavenly and demonic realms. As a child I would lose hours of sleep because of demonic night terrors. Horrifying and strange faces would float across my mind's eye. Every so often I would actually see some of those unearthly faces manifest.

One such manifestation lingered over a period of several days. In my childhood home my dad had a small office that doubled as the family computer room. I would go in that room to play with a children's art program. One day while I was passing the office, I noticed a gray object in the corner.

When I stopped to take a better look, I was startled by what I saw. There, standing still in the corner of my dad's office, was a small, gray-blue man. His skin tone was that of a corpse. He was three to four feet tall and wrapped in torn pieces of cloth. Tightly fixed around his body were thick chains that kept his arms folded across his body. I saw him every day over a period of a few days. It made such an impression on me that I wrote about seeing it in my third grade writing class. I insisted on categorizing my story as "fact" as opposed to "fiction," but my teacher insisted that what I saw was an "imaginary friend."

My parents didn't know about what was happening until our family was all gathered in my dad's office to look at some church flyers he had printed. As my dad passed out the flyers to each family member, I kept pressing him to give one to "the man in the corner." Only then did I realize I was

the only one who could see him. Realizing that what I saw was demonic, my parents immediately engaged in spiritual warfare by rebuking the demonic being through prayer, and I never saw that strange being again (the night terrors also stopped for a season).

I had dozens of similar experiences while I was growing up. So you see, there was never a doubt in my mind that there was a cosmic clash between good and evil. To me the realm of the spirit was never anything less than real. But though I was aware of the spiritual realm, I did not gain a meaningful understanding of it until after I entered the ministry several years later. And when I gained that understanding, everything began to change.

It began with a trip to the Midwest. I went from California to the Bible Belt to preach the morning service at a small church. My sermon was about pursuing holiness and abandoning all spiritual compromise, and at the end of it, as I still do to this day, I welcomed to the altar anyone who wanted to receive prayer. The Holy Spirit was moving in an incredible way, and I could see that people were being touched by God's power.

As soon as I gave the invitation to receive prayer, people began to pack the stage area, expectantly

waiting for God to touch their lives in some way. God's presence was thick in the room; at one point it seemed that the power of the Holy Spirit was filling the air in a tangible, electric manner. I asked everyone who wanted prayer to form a line. I told them, "If anyone here needs to be set free from anything, I believe God can set you free! I'll pray for everyone who wants to receive freedom and a fresh touch from the Holy Spirit."

People began to form a line as I had instructed. I could tell by the expressions on their faces that they fully expected God to do something for them—we all could feel the power of God in an intense way. So I began to pray for people, and as I did, they began to tremble and collapse to the floor under the weight of God's power. The Holy Spirit's presence was so thick that people had trouble standing as soon as they stepped onto the stage area. It was as if the platform itself was plugged into a power outlet, and when the people connected to it, their bodies would give out.

Tears were flowing from tightly shut eyes. Hands were lifted in thankful praise. Hearts were moved to humble worship. Some were healed of sickness. Others were healed of emotional wounds. Many began to speak in tongues for the first time as they

received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All I could do was thank the Lord for what He was doing.

Eventually the tangible expression of God's power subsided, and the church service was brought to a formal close. I felt alive! I was energized and elated. Even after the service was over, I felt a residue of God's power moving about my entire being.

In times like those when the power of God can be felt with such intensity, I find it impossible to carry on as if nothing has happened—or is happening. So after those kinds of services, I often will ask the pastor to bring his church leaders and key members backstage. Then I'll release whatever it is that God has placed on me. If I don't do that, I'll be up all night! In fact, sometimes those who receive that impartation after the service are left lying on the floor for hours, unable to get up.

I'm telling you this so that you get an idea of how I was feeling. It was as though I was walking in my own little piece of heaven on earth. I thought nothing would be able to bring me down. I felt invincible. But then I left the building.

As I was exiting the facility, I passed through the church lobby. While I was on my way through the lobby, a man intercepted me and asked if he could

speak with me for a moment. In a great mood, I agreed to speak with the man for a few minutes.

The man was very kind and diplomatic in his speech, and he told me in a gentle voice, “You know, brother David, I have the gift of discernment. I can tell when people have demonic beings in them. And to be honest with you, there were a few people who received prayer tonight who left still influenced or bound by demonic beings.”

After hearing the man out, I respectfully asked him how anyone could experience the power of God like that and still be bound by demons. After all, it was such a powerful service. His response really got me thinking. Still very kind and diplomatic, the man explained: “Well, not all of them experienced the power of God like you think they did. It’s possible for people to fake that kind of experience, and some of them, though not all of them, faked their experience.”

At that point the man really had my attention. “OK,” I said, “so how do they get set free?” He insisted, “They have to want to be free. They have to surrender to what God is doing.”

Though I didn’t, and still to this day do not, agree with everything he said, I perceived a certain depth to

his words and sensed the formation of a divine connection. As we exchanged contact information, the man told me, “Tonight I’m going to be praying for someone who is demon-possessed. Would you like to help me pray for him?”

Intrigued, I agreed to meet with the man later that evening at the church. I’ll call him John for the rest of this story.

MY FIRST EXORCISM

After a day of anticipation I met with John at the church. I was both excited and, to be honest, somewhat apprehensive. I had never seen a full-on exorcism. All I could envision was what pop culture had taught me about the demon-possessed: ghoulish faces, contorted torsos, levitating bodies, and spinning heads. I had no idea what to expect.

When I met John at the church, I was introduced to a bearded man dressed in blue jeans and a button-down flannel shirt. The man was short, olive-skinned, and very calm. He didn’t have all-black eyes and thankfully he was walking, not levitating. John asked the man, “So what’s going on with you?” The

man replied in a soft monotone, “I just feel like there’s something in me or on me. I go into these fits of rage. I need the Lord, and I want to be set free.”

I looked at John to see what he would say, but John wasted no time with conversation. He looked right at the man and sternly said, “You need to leave this man alone.” There was a long, awkward pause where John and the man just stared at each other. The man, still very calm, said something like, “What am I supposed to do now?” Without hesitation, John interjected, “I’m not talking to you.” Those words sent a chill up my spine. And as if that wasn’t intense enough, as soon as John spoke those words, the man’s demeanor changed. His personality just flipped into another.

The man let out a deep, angry roar. In two different voices. At the same time.

More intrigued than frightened, I stood frozen as I observed this scene. The unusual back-and-forth prayer session took hours (I didn’t think then and still do not believe it should take that long to expel a demon), but eventually the man was finally freed from demonic influence.

After that day I made special effort to consider whether someone seeking breakthrough in a

particular area may be dealing with demon possession. As a result, I began to see people set free of demonic bondage when I ministered. After seeing that exorcism, I realized that I had the same power to cast out demons that the living Christ had while He walked upon the earth.

Jesus Himself said, "These signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons" (Mark 16:17). What a truth! Jesus "disarmed authorities and powers" and "made a show of them openly, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col. 2:15)—and He passed the same authority over demons to you and me. The same power that overthrew a legion of demons, the same authority that rested upon the word of Christ has been given to you and me. There is not a single believer who lacks the ability to undo and upset the work of the devil.

A while after my experience with John, I had been invited to speak at a youth conference. It was 2008, and I had been in ministry for just about seven years. While meeting with the conference coordinator for lunch, I was briefed on the event's theme and overall purpose. I was not being invited as one of the main speakers but was asked to lead three special breakout classes over a period of three days. I was also

instructed to teach on three topics: divine healing, the prophetic, and spiritual warfare.

Being that my sessions were optional for participants, the breakout classes took place between the conference's main morning and evening sessions. I think most people, myself included, figured that only a handful of teens and young adults would show up at the breakout sessions, especially since there was so much entertainment to be found at the resort hotel. So my team and I were placed in a room with a capacity of about thirty, and even then we were expecting to fill only about half the seats. I was prepared to teach a group of twelve or fifteen.

When the first session rolled around, to my surprise about forty people attended. I do not recall exactly what I taught, but I do remember being pleasantly surprised by the way the Holy Spirit began to move. The presence of the Holy Spirit was so rich at that first session. Teens and young adults began receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of speaking in tongues. They began to prophesy and pray for one another. And the worship—it was as if we had joined our voices with angelic beings! The atmosphere was truly heavenly. A beautiful, energizing presence had come to rest upon that

room, filling the air like a mist. And soon healing miracles began to take place as everyone laid hands upon one another. Eye problems were healed. Joint problems were healed. We even witnessed someone with a hernia receive an instant healing. The guy, who was about my age, limped up to the front of the building bent over in pain. Just by the look on his face, it was obvious to everyone that his suffering was excruciating. I placed my hand on him, and he began to shake and then fell to the floor. When he was picked up from the ground, he told us all his pain was completely gone. The people came alive with excitement.

After the session word spread about how God had visited the breakout class, and to my surprise, the next session was so jam-packed that we ran out of chairs. People sat on the floor in front of the stage area, stood alongside the walls, and even crowded into the hallway outside the conference room.

Standing before an excited and faith-filled group, I began to teach on the believer's authority over demonic beings. While exposing demons and their tactics, I was teaching the sort of truth that agitates and upsets the forces of hell. It wasn't long before strange things started to occur.

A teenage boy who was sitting toward the front suddenly fell to the floor and began to convulse. He was yelling as if he were in anguish. The boy shook violently, and people began to become uneasy. It was at that moment that I realized that we, joined together in bold prayer and heartfelt worship, had broken a demonic stronghold in the spiritual realm.

Several people began to collapse to the floor and convulse. I was stunned and almost horrified to see how many "professing Christians" were actually bound by demons.

The presence of Jesus was so potent in that little room that I did not have to lay my hands on a single person possessed by demons. Instead, I instructed the people to begin to pray and worship. And it was in that atmosphere that almost every demon-oppressed person was delivered.

Eventually the session came to a close, but that wasn't the end of the warfare. In fact, the conflict began to intensify. The presence of God had so empowered His people that for the rest of the conference week we sensed the Spirit of God everywhere we went. I received a barrage of text messages and phone calls. Teens and young adults had begun to host Bible studies in their hotel rooms.

As a result, demons were manifesting all over the resort—in hotel rooms and even at another event during the conference. To onlookers at the hotel, it must have looked like mayhem.

DEMONS ARE REAL

During that week many had finally become aware of the spiritual realm and of this truth: *demons are real*. They're here. And they've *been* here for a long time.

It does no good to deny or ignore the existence of demons because they never lose sight of us. Demons are not metaphors for evil, and they are not figments of religious fantasy. They are just as real as you or me.

There is more to our world than can be measured with scientific instruments. More exists than empirical methods of observation can detect. Beyond the veil that shrouds the spiritual world from our eyes, there is a flurry of activity. The spiritual world is charged with movement and teeming with life.

You and I must become aware of that spiritual world and take it seriously. We must look beyond the self-help worldview many churches have adopted of

late and appreciate the magnitude of the spiritual realm. We must see all we do in the light of the eternal, spiritual world that rests just beyond our natural senses.

Your purpose, your destiny cannot be reached through positive thinking alone. Demons—evil, sentient beings from another realm—have committed themselves to contradicting the will of God. But since they cannot harm God Himself, they desire to destroy mankind, God's beloved creation. They are determined to bring destruction. And their most concerted assault is on the believer, for if they can claim the spiritual life of a believer, then to some measure they can prevent the work of the gospel. Your calling is the devil's number one target. But Satan and his demons aim from the shadows. They hide, veiling themselves from your awareness. The old saying holds true: the devil's greatest lie is that he does not exist.

The devil and his demons exist. Of this we must be convinced. The supernatural is not a reality only for those who are interested in it. The spiritual realm even influences those who scoff at it. Often those who live with an awareness of the spiritual realm are accused of being weird or even "too spiritual." Yet,

preferring to be down to earth, many believers—who are, in fact, citizens of heaven—fail to prevail when under demonic attack simply because they refuse to believe they have an enemy that would wish to attack them.

But really think about it. If Jesus said, "In My name they will cast out demons" (Mark 16:17), how could demons not exist? And why would we need to expel demonic beings if they were ineffective or powerless? Nothing is written in God's Word without reason. Demons still attack and possess people.

The modern world casts a condescending glare on those who believe in the supernatural world and its inhabitants. That's to be expected. In every time frame the church faces pressure to conform. And in this hour that pressure is being applied more heavily than ever before. Yet, especially in these times it is important for us to fasten a determined grip on the fundamentals of our faith. Now is not the time for apologies but for bold proclamations. The supernatural exists. There is a heaven, and there is a hell. There is a God, and mankind has an eternal soul. Angels are real. Prayer works. And miracles happen.

The spiritual realm is not a hazy fantasy world. It is more real than the world in which we live today. It

cannot be analyzed with scientific methods, and some take that to mean it doesn't exist. But it is illogical to demand that the spiritual realm, what exists *beyond* the material world, be detected by observation *of* the material world. Anything that can be observed in the material world is a part of the material world and, therefore, cannot be defined as supernatural.

The spiritual is quite elusive in the natural. Science can account for some things but not all things. It is wonderful but limited. So it is a mistake to assume that only what we can see, feel, or document with scientific means is true.

This is important, because not being able to see the spiritual world doesn't keep it from affecting our lives. In fact, the natural and spiritual realms heavily affect each other. This is why the apostle Paul wrote that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12, KJV).

Our spiritual enemy does not consist of flesh and blood. He is immaterial. Our enemy is unearthly, otherworldly. But he does exist. So from where have such awful beings come, and why do they carry

such a profound hatred for us?

2

Satan Was an Angel

Make your own way. Choose your own path. You create your own life. By the sheer force of your will, you must master your own destiny.

—SATAN

ENCOUR AGING REBELLION IS Satan's hallmark. In fact, it's part of his origin story. Once a brilliant angel, Satan wants mankind to rebel against God

because he knows from experience that mutiny never ends well, that it results in a lower state of being.

Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was there a place for them in heaven any longer. The great dragon was cast out, that ancient serpent called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.

—REVELATION 12:7–9

At some point after the creation of man, the devil rebelled against God. Foolish and pride-filled, the devil sought to incite a celestial mutiny against the Creator of all things. Because of his audacious act of naïve defiance, Satan was hurled down from heaven onto the earth. All the angels that marched in Satan's rebellious charge were thrown down with him. In Luke's Gospel Jesus describes His very own eyewitness account of that great conflict and the devil's banishment.

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us through Your name." He said to them, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Look, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing shall by any means hurt you."

—LUKE 10:17–19

Isaiah 14 gives us more details on the heavenly eviction. In the following passage, Isaiah was prophesying to Israel about their soon-coming victory over their captors, Babylon. The prophet begins his message with an encouragement from God:

And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow.

—ISAIAH 14:3, KJV

God then speaks through Isaiah to deliver a strong message of warning to the king of Babylon.

That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

—ISAIAH 14:4, KJV

The prophet goes on to declare:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon

thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?

—ISAIAH 14:12–16, KJV

And it is that portion of Scripture that adds to our knowledge of Satan's fall. How do we know Isaiah's prophetic word is describing Satan?

Well, Lucifer is synonymous with "Satan" and "the devil" because Scripture makes no mention of anyone else who had fallen from heaven, save for the angels that went along with him. Satan is the only biblical character who was cast down from heaven, so this is clearly an analogous reference to Satan.

It is a proverbial parallel. Isaiah is comparing the king of Babylon to Lucifer for two reasons.

Firstly, Isaiah is adding weight to the warning by drawing a parallel between the king of Babylon's pride and Satan's pride. It is clear that Isaiah was quoting a proverb, since Isaiah 14:4 says "take up this proverb against the king of Babylon" (KJV). I speculate that the proverb Isaiah quoted could have been well known in that day, as the people were possibly familiar with the story of Satan's fall. It was intended for the king of Babylon to see himself reflected in the sobering proverb and fear. God was essentially saying, "Just as Satan fell because of

pride, so will you."

Secondly, by making the comparison between the king and Satan, Isaiah is revealing the true power and mind behind the king's agenda: Satan. The prophet identifies Satan as the king's unseen evil influence. This reality should not be hard to imagine, for Scripture tells us that we do not battle flesh; we battle spiritual opposition (Eph. 6:12). Truly, Satan (Lucifer) was the driving influence behind the king of Babylon's efforts. No wonder God chose to warn the king using Satan as a cautionary tale! Satan was working through the king of Babylon to oppose God's people, and the king was taking on the nature of Satan.

We can see throughout history that Satan has used earthly vessels to attack God's people. From Pharaoh's genocide of baby Hebrew boys to the persecution of the early church, even down through the Holocaust and modern murders of Christians in the Middle East, the people of God have been under direct attack. Those attacks might be carried out by human beings, but we must not forget their spiritual roots. Behind every evil earthly power is an even more evil satanic power. In this regard the supernatural worldview presents a powerful and

profound explanation of evil regimes and people.

So we can gather clues about Satan's fall from Isaiah 14, because it is clear that Isaiah, even though he is addressing the king of Babylon, is additionally describing the former standing of Satan.

ANOTHER PROPHETIC PARALLEL

Just as Isaiah the prophet compared the king of Babylon with Satan, the prophet Ezekiel likened the king of Tyre to Lucifer. His pride is also compared with Satan's pride.

> Son of man, sing this funeral song for the king of Tyre. Give him this message from the Sovereign Lord:
>
> You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God. . . . I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire. You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you.
>
> —EZEKIEL 28:12–14, NLT

Just as we saw in Isaiah's prophecy, Ezekiel's prophecy also has a duel meaning. It is both a warning to the king of Tyre and a description of

Satan. How do we know this? Because the king of Tyre could not have been:

- "In Eden, the garden of God"
- "The mighty angelic guardian"
- "Blameless in all"

The king of Tyre, like the king of Babylon, was being simultaneously warned by God and compared with Satan. Truly, anyone who willingly rebels against God is satanic in nature and can thus be compared to the pride-filled deceiver.

> Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.
>
> —EPHESIANS 2:2, KJV

It's almost burdensome to contemplate the influence of Satan and the satanic nature mankind embraces by yielding to the rebellious lures of sin. When I think of evil political regimes, heinous murders, psychotic minds, immoral behaviors, perverted truths, and false religions, I am compelled to consider the true influence behind it all. Satan was cast down from heaven, and now he desires to

destroy all that God loves. The world is broken because it is under demonic influence, and it is under satanic influence because sin entered the world. It wasn't always this way.

Satan was one of the highest-ranking angels, if not the highest-ranking angel, in all of heaven. Described as the "son of the morning" (Isa. 14:12), Satan seems to have had an aura of royalty about him. The devil is described as once having had exquisite beauty and powerful influence. As if mourning the loss of Satan's great splendor, God almost seems grief-stricken when He declares through His prophet, "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty" (Ezek. 28:13).

Though I have often heard it suggested that Satan might have been heaven's worship leader, we cannot know for sure what his exact duties were. Except for a mention of musical pipes (Ezek. 28:13), not much more is recorded. We know that angels worship God, and we know that Satan was a high-ranking angel (likely the highest). So it's not too much of a stretch to believe that Satan was in charge of orchestrating the worship of God. But what we know for certain is that Satan was mighty. In fact, even after Satan had fallen, Michael the archangel, who remembered Satan

before the rebellion, did not even dare to confront the devil alone.

> But even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, did not dare accuse the devil of blasphemy, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (This took place when Michael was arguing with the devil about Moses' body.)
>
> —JUDE 1:9, NLT

Satan was counted among the great heavenly beings. However, because of the pride that poisoned his heart, Satan said to himself, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isa. 14:13). Satan then led a rebellion against God. Think of how persuasive one must be in order to convince those who have laid eyes upon the very glory of God to rebel against their Creator. If the angels, who saw God with their eyes, could be deceived, how much more is man, who cannot see God, vulnerable to Satan's dark deception?

Of course, Satan and his angels were not able to win the "war" against God's angelic army. According to the Book of Revelation, "he and his angels were forced out of heaven" and were "thrown down to the earth" (Rev. 12:8–9, NLT).

So when did all of this happen? And what exactly

inspired Satan to rebel?

3

Satan Desires Dominion

Freedom is doing whatever you will to do. When you do according to your desire and pleasure, you are enslaved to no one.

—SATAN

WE KNOW THAT Satan must have rebelled against God at some point after the creation of the world. Otherwise, how could Satan and his angels have been "thrown down to the earth" (Rev. 12:9, NLT)?

Furthermore, we know that Satan fell after the creation of man, because when God completed His creation, He saw that it "was very good!" (Gen. 1:31, KJV). God would not have considered His creation "good" if the devil's deceptive influence had been present on the earth.

The Bible does not tell us how long man was on the earth before the devil's rebellion, so it could have been a while. The Bible also does not tell us how long Adam and Eve were on the earth before they sinned, so there was plenty of time for Satan to fall before man sinned, but I suspect that Satan fell just a few days before man fell. So this places the fall of Satan *after* the creation of man but *before* man's fall.

Some speculate that Satan could have fallen between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. I do not believe that to be the case because Satan had to have spent some time in the Garden of Eden *before* his fall, even if just a day, because the prophet Ezekiel declares, "You were in Eden, the garden of God" (Ezek. 28:13). Of course, Satan was also in the garden after his fall, but the context of that verse in Ezekiel is telling us of a time when Satan was in Eden *before* he was a fallen creation. So in both his holy and his fallen state Satan had access to both heaven and

earth. (We see clues of this in Job chapters 1 and 2.) Satan traveled between God's realm of heaven and man's realm of earth—between where God ruled and where man ruled. In fact, I believe man's dominion is exactly what inspired the devil to rebel in the first place.

Think about it. What changed from the time Satan was created to the moment he decided to rebel? Many suggest pride. That's certainly part of it. Some say it was jealousy. I believe that is certainly the case.

But up to that point Satan had worshipped God with no problems or conflict. What could have invoked such shortsighted jealousy? There was harmony, a perfect flow of all things. In the eons that likely passed before the creation of man, why didn't Satan rebel? There had to have been a triggering event, something that broke the monotony, something that changed everything.

What invoked jealousy in Lucifer? What disrupted his normal state of mind? What caused Satan to stop faithfully serving God? What caused him to desire to be "like the most high"? The answer lies in a well-known Bible verse:

> And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the

fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

—GENESIS 1:26, KJV

Satan witnessed the creation of man, and for the first time he was introduced to the radical idea that the creation could bear the image of the Creator. Man was like the Most High, and Satan wanted to be the same. Satan became jealous, but he wasn't jealous of God; he was jealous of man. Man bore the image of God. Satan, likely looking down upon man, considered himself a candidate for such greatness. He said to himself, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isa. 14:13, KJV).

With contempt and malice in his heart, the enemy determined to take over the heavenly throne. I believe the attack came on or around the seventh day of creation, the day God ceased creating. However, as you likely know, the enemy failed. The Bible tells us in Revelation 12 that Satan and the angels that sided with him were banished to earth.

Satan was then placed under the subjection of Adam. At the time man had complete dominion over the earth. So if Satan was banished to live upon the earth, he too was under Adam's God-given authority.

This might have been when the devil developed a hatred of man and a desire to claim man's dominion.

From very early on God intended for man to have dominion over the devil. I am certain that being subject to man, a creation he considered inferior, caused Satan to become further enraged. That rage continues to this day, compounding every time God shows mankind grace.

Most say that God did not or will not offer Satan a second chance. But is it possible that banishment to earth was Satan's second chance? Sure, it was a lower form of existence for Satan, but it was better than his current destiny—hellfire. Had he let go of his pride, he possibly could have lived in subjection to man.

Yet in his fallen state the devil again attempted an overthrow. That time he aimed to take dominion from man. And sadly that time he succeeded. The enemy could not "ascend" as he had wished, so Satan was left with only one option. If he could not raise himself to a higher state, he would have to drag man to a lower state. And Satan knew from experience that the path to a lower state was rebellion.

God had instructed Adam to not eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:

The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the LORD God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die."

—GENESIS 2:15–17, NLT

This knowledge was, of course, later passed to Eve. Yet, despite knowing God's explicit command, Adam and Eve allowed themselves to be deceived.

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

"Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

"You will not die!" the serpent replied to the woman. "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."

The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

—GENESIS 3:1–7, NLT

The serpent in the garden was Satan, as this verse indicates:

> And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.
>
> —REVELATION 20:2, KJV

Satan, the ancient serpent, tempted Adam and Eve, deceiving them to the point of disobedience.

At this point a very pressing question arises: How could God expect Adam and Eve to know better before they had knowledge of good and evil? It seems to be a catch-22. Without such knowledge, they would not know right from wrong. So then how could they know it was wrong to disobey God? It seems that they were set up for failure.

However, the description "good and evil" is what is known as a merism, which is a figure of speech that is used to express or describe completeness. For example, if I say that I searched for something "high and low," you'd know I was basically saying that I searched everywhere I could think to search. Other examples of merisms include "ladies and gentlemen," which means "everyone," and "near and far," which means "everywhere."

A famous set of merisms is found in this passage

of Scripture:

> For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
>
> —ROMANS 8:38–39, KJV

Basically this passage uses merisms to say that absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God.

The merism "good and evil" is used to describe all knowledge—at least figuratively, at most literally. Basically the serpent was saying the fruit would give man knowledge beyond himself or vast knowledge. So it is safe to say Adam and Eve certainly knew good and evil before eating of the forbidden fruit. We know that because they lived in the Garden of Eden, which was good because God made it. To say that one can know good without knowing evil would be logically inconsistent. Thus, Adam and Eve could justly be held accountable for their actions. Their sin, like all other sin, was inexcusable.

Also, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil could not bear any actual evil unto itself, because,

once again, all of creation was "good." It also could not have been poisonous for the very same reason. Simply put, it was a tree that gave man a vast amount of knowledge, but that knowledge was not meant for man, at least not yet. I believe it's quite possible that God could have allowed Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit later on after they developed further.

PRESENTED WITH A CHOICE

What's most important to note here is that the existence of this forbidden tree presented man with a choice. Without that choice, a true loving relationship between God and man could not have existed. True love cannot be forced; it can only be chosen. So why did God place that tree in the garden? When it comes down to it, it was all for love.

There was another tree in the Garden of Eden called the tree of life:

> And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
>
> —GENESIS 2:9, KJV

That tree, as its name implies, brought life. Though an actual tree, it is a type and shadow of Christ. The tree of life was not a forbidden tree. Of it man was free to eat.

Now, as we just saw in Genesis 3:7, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, "their eyes were opened." They were suddenly filled with knowledge. They also "suddenly felt shame at their nakedness." Though the two consequences are mentioned alongside each other, it's important to note that they are not necessarily directly connected. By that I mean that Adam and Eve did not feel shame because their eyes were opened. Their eyes were opened because they ate the fruit of knowledge. They felt shame because they had fallen into a lower state of being.

In their former state nakedness was no cause for shame. Knowledge came from the fruit, shame came from a lower state, and the lower state came from disobedience.

When each consequence is understood on its own, it raises fewer problematic questions. For example, these questions can be avoided: Why would Adam and Eve feel shame at their nakedness if that's how God made them? Did they gain knowledge of an already existent shameful state? Was the nakedness

shameful before they knew about it? Again, such questions can be avoided if the consequences are properly understood

As a result of man's disobedience, death entered the world:

> Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.
>
> —ROMANS 5:12, KJV

In addition to death entering the world, several other consequences resulted from man's disobedience:

1. The shame of sin (Gen. 3:7)
2. The tendency to avoid God (v. 8)
3. Labor pains (v. 16)
4. Discord between man and woman (v. 16)
5. A cursed ground (vv. 17–18)

Finally mankind was banished from the Garden of Eden in the same manner that Satan was banished from heaven.

> Then the LORD God said, "Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take

fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!" So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

—GENESIS 3:22–24, NLT

God saw that man had come to possess vast amounts of knowledge. Such knowledge, coupled with the ability to live forever, bestowed upon a fallen creation was a formula for great destruction. It may seem cruel of God to take from man what seemed to be his only chance of reclaiming his eternal state. However, had man eaten of the Tree of Life, his fate in his fallen state would have been sealed. After eating from that tree, mankind would have become eternally fallen, never again able to reclaim life eternal as God intended. God's mercy kept them out of the garden. From that point on God began to prepare humanity for the advent of Christ, who would provide a path to eternal life.

All Satan and his angels want is to keep mankind from ever obtaining eternal life through Christ and thus having dominion over them again. Fallen angels have not been given grace like man has, so they can

never regain their place. The devil and his angels seek to keep man subjected to them. So long as man is fallen, he is subjected to Hell's rule.

Satan wants to rule this world vicariously through the influence he can gain over man. This is why he wants to stop the gospel, because those who respond to the gospel message and embrace Christ as their Savior regain their dominion over Satan.

So we know the story of Satan, and we know the story of his fallen angels. They were banished to earth and eventually found discord with man. But it's important to now draw your attention to the fact that there is a difference between fallen angels and demonic beings.

4

Demons Are Not Fallen Angels

Why take a closer look? Truth is whatever you believe it to be.
—SATAN

THROUGH MY OBSERVATION and study of Scripture, I have come to believe, quite confidently, that demons cannot be fallen angels. Now, I know that idea will be rather jarring for some people. It may seem that I am

not only challenging a widely held traditional view but also contradicting very clear teachings of the Bible. Well, the idea that demons are not fallen angels certainly contradicts tradition. But in no way does it contradict Scripture.

The Bible speaks of demons, and it speaks of the fall of Lucifer and the co-rebellion of a third of the angels, but no verses actually link the two and define demons as fallen angels. The idea that demons are fallen angels is simply a long-held tradition. The Bible actually gives three subtle distinctions between demons and fallen angels, and I want to explore each one here.

DEMONS NEED BODIES

Demons seek to possess bodies and seem rather uncomfortable being outside of them. Take for instance the story of a man possessed by an entire legion of demons. While being cast out, the demons in that story begged Jesus to send them into a herd of pigs:

> There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding in the distance. So the demons begged, "If you cast us out, send us into that herd

of pigs."

—MATTHEW 8:30–31, NLT

Fallen angels, however, can appear in physical form and even interact with mankind. In Genesis fallen angels even procreated with women. The bizarre procreation resulted in the birth of giants.

There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

—GENESIS 6:4, KJV

For that procreation, God punished the "sons of God" by binding them in "everlasting chains" until the Day of Judgment (Jude 6). Keep in mind that every reference to "sons of God" in the Old Testament was a reference to supernatural beings or angels. Only in the New Testament does "sons of God" refer to the redeemed children of God. So we know that it wasn't ordinary men, as some might suggest, who procreated with the "daughters of men." Had those referred to in Genesis 6:4 been mere ordinary men, there would be no clear reason their procreation would produce giants.

Some also suggest that perhaps "sons of God"

referred to a select group of people who were forbidden to procreate with a certain other group. Still, that would not explain why their union produced giants or why God punished their actions so harshly.

There are others still who say angels cannot breed, citing Matthew 22:30: "For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven" (NLT). But that verse tells us only that angels do not marry. Angels can still have a gender and appear to mankind in earthly bodies. The Book of Hebrews tells us that angels can actually walk around among us without being noticed.

> Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!
>
> —HEBREWS 13:2, NLT

Consider also the angels at Christ's empty tomb.

> As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.
>
> —LUKE 24:4, NLT

Also, the men of Sodom desired to have sex with the angels that appeared to Lot. How could that be unless the angels had bodies and looked like human

beings?

> That evening the two angels came to the entrance of the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting there, and when he saw them, he stood up to meet them. Then he welcomed them and bowed with his face to the ground. . . . But before they retired for the night, all the men of Sodom, young and old, came from all over the city and surrounded the house. They shouted to Lot, "Where are the men who came to spend the night with you? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them!"
>
> —GENESIS 19:1, 4–5, NLT

From Scripture, we see that both fallen angels and holy angels *have* bodies. In contrast, demons greatly *desire* bodies because they do not have them. Demons are clingy, needy, angry, tormented creatures. That is the first distinction between fallen angels and demons.

DEMONS WANDER THE EARTH

Demons are cursed to wander the earth while fallen angels still have the ability to stand before God in heavenly places. Though they were banished from heaven, the fallen angels still gave an account of their doings.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

—JOB 1:6, KJV

I'll give you a few good reasons to believe fallen angels, and not just heavenly angels, were among those who stood before God in the story recorded in the Book of Job. First, the devil was no longer Lucifer, for the Book of Job refers to him as "Satan." Second, we also know that Satan was in his fallen state because later in the story of Job he sought to steal from, kill, and destroy Job. As Jesus said, "The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10, NLT).

Third, we know from the following verse that Job's story took place *after* the great flood, which means it definitely took place after the fall of both man and Satan.

Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood?

—JOB 22:15–16, KJV

So if Satan in his fallen state was among the angels who had to give an account in Job, it is consistent to believe that other fallen angels were called upon as

well. Fallen angels can appear in heavenly places. Therefore, fallen angels are not completely bound to earth. Demons, however, can only wander the earth or live in a body, as Jesus explained:

When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, seeking rest but finding none.

—MATTHEW 12:43, NLT

Nowhere in Scripture do we see demons moving from the earth to God's presence. Those accounts are always referring to fallen angels.

DEMONS ARE CALLED "DEVILS" AND "UNCLEAN SPIRITS"

When referring to fallen angels, New Testament scriptures do not use the terms *demons*, *devils*, or *unclean spirits*. Instead, the Bible makes reference to fallen angels by simply using a negative description or context. For example, these verses clearly describe fallen angels:

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment . . .

—2 PETER 2:4, KJV

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

—JUDE 1:6, KJV

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

—MATTHEW 25:41, KJV

In these verses there is no mention of demons or devils. Instead, to make a distinction between God's holy angels and fallen angels, the New Testament simply calls them the angels "that sinned" or "which kept not their first estate."

Apart from the simple use of negative descriptions, the New Testament also uses context to draw distinctions between fallen angels and holy angels. An example of this is when in Matthew 25:41 hell is described as a place prepared for "the devil and his angels" (KJV). The angels in that verse were said to belong to the devil, so it is obvious that they were fallen.

Furthermore, in the following verse, while making a strong point about the need to avoid false gospels,

Paul the Apostle mentions angels "from heaven."

> Although if we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than the one we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
>
> —GALATIANS 1:8

Of course, it's obvious that one should reject the gospel of a fallen angel, but it might not have been as obvious to the Galatians that they should reject a different gospel from even a *holy* angel. To drive his point home, Paul essentially warns, "Even if one of the angels *from heaven* should preach to you another gospel, do not be deceived." In other words, "Don't be swayed even if one of the good guys starts to preach a different gospel."

Paul's warning is an example of how the New Testament contrasts both fallen and holy angels. No special term is used to describe fallen angels; they are simply described in a negative way and/or placed in a negative context. Demons, on the other hand, are referred to as "devils," "unclean spirits," and "demons."

So if demons are not fallen angels, what are they?

5

Demons Are Nephilim

God said, "Let us make man in Our image." So, troops, let us distort the image of man, corrupt his nature, and sway him to unite with us to rebel against God and bring destruction. Together, we will reshape the world.

—SATAN

IN THE PREVIOUS chapter you read that there once

were giants in the land. Let's look again at that scripture.

There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

—GENESIS 6:4, KJV

The Hebrew word for "giants" in this verse is *nĕphiyl*. Thus, the giants from Genesis chapter 6 are most commonly called the Nephilim. We know from the Scripture that Nephilim are a hybrid offspring, the monstrous result of fallen angels procreating with women.

Now, if you'll recall, when Satan and his angels rebelled, they were punished by being sent to earth. Yet in the following verses we also see that angels were punished by being chained in darkness until the Day of Judgment:

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

—2 PETER 2:4, KJV

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own

habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

—JUDE 6, KJV

The sin described in the previous verses cannot be the participation in Satan's mutiny. The punishment for that was banishment to earth. So is there a contradiction here? By no means! If the Bible describes two different angelic punishments, it can only mean that there were two separate angelic sins:

- The rebellion against God punished by banishment to earth (Rev. 12:9)
- The procreation with women punished by chains of darkness (2 Pet. 2:4)

Why fallen angels would choose to breed with human beings is left to speculation. Some suggest that Satan orchestrated this event to help grow his army while others claim the fallen angels sought to pollute the DNA of men so they might prevent the seed that God said would crush them: Jesus Christ.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

—GENESIS 3:15, KJV

We know that fallen angels are securely chained until the great Judgment Day. But they had to have done something else to be punished a second time. That "something else" is the procreation with women referenced in Genesis 6. When they rebelled, they were banished to earth. But when they procreated with women, they were chained in darkness.

Though we know that about a third of the angels rebelled against God, we do not know how many fallen angels make up that percentage. Furthermore, we do not even know what percentage of those fallen angels participated in the ungodly procreation. Thus we can only speculate about the percentage of fallen angels that are chained in darkness and the percentage that are still roaming free. In other words, we do not know how many fallen angels remain "free" or how many fallen angels are currently chained in darkness.

It's quite possible that all of the fallen angels participated in the earthly procreation. Whatever the truth may be, I do find it to be a fascinating clue that most of the New Testament references to the activity of fallen angels are past tense.

However, one of the places where the activity of fallen angels isn't mentioned in the past tense is in

Revelation 9. There the angelic activity is described in the *future tense*. That chapter makes mention of an angel named Apollyon. He is the king of a swarm of locusts that is unleashed on the world to torment mankind. Those "locusts" could be the fallen angels that are currently bound in "everlasting chains," and Revelation 9 could perhaps be referring to what some call Judgment Day. (I highly recommend that you study Revelation 9 to learn more about this future release of evil upon the earth because it could be describing the future release of fallen angels.)

Revelation 9 is certainly interesting, but it is not describing the *present* activity of fallen angels. As I wrote, for the most part, it seems that the activity of fallen angels has come to a relatively dramatic slowdown. This is why I think most of the fallen angels (if not all) are chained in darkness, and the ones that are chained currently have no influence in the earth.

If that's the case, if fallen angels were chained for their second sin, the question that naturally follows is, "Did Satan get chained too?" Because we are warned to be on the lookout for his attacks and because his activity is recorded in the New Testament, it is conclusive that he is still able to move

about the earth.

> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.
>
> —1 PETER 5:8, KJV

The reason I am writing to you about the chaining of the fallen angels is twofold. First, I want to make a clear distinction between Nephilim and fallen angels. The Nephilim may have come from fallen angels, but they are not fallen angels themselves. Nephilim are not bound in "everlasting chains." Second, the severity of the punishment of fallen angels will help you to realize just how vile and heinous their actions were.

Wherever the fallen angels might be today, we do know that the second angelic sin had heavy consequences. Their perverted procreation did not just get them chained; it changed the world for the worse.

Think of how perverse things had become. Fallen angels and rebellious humans came together to give rise to a new form of twisted creation, the likes of which had never before existed. God did not create such peculiar hybrids. They were born of disobedience and rebellion. That was the peak of

perversion, and this is why God took severe action. Such depravity gave God no choice but to start over.

> And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.
>
> —GENESIS 6:5–7, KJV

In the very next chapter of Genesis we read of the flood of Noah. In that flood all life on earth was destroyed, save for those aboard Noah's ark. The bloodlines of men had become corrupt, blended with that of fallen angels. Because the birth of Christ was paramount, God needed to reset the generations and prevent future pollution of man's offspring. In that flood the bodies of the Nephilim were destroyed. Here's where it gets particularly interesting.

We know where ungodly men go when they die, and we know where godly men go when they die. But where do hybrids—half-man and half-fallen angel—go when they die? Without bodies, they remain on the earth as what we call demons.

6

Demons Possess Human Bodies

Troops, we must convince man to do whatever he wills, for this is the means by which we enter him. If he makes his own choices without consulting with his Creator, at some point he will unknowingly give you access to more than he understands.

—SATAN

DEMONS ARE HUMAN-ANGEL hybrids that lost their bodies in the worldwide flood, and they are parasites. They seek bodies to inhabit. We see this in Jesus's words to His disciples:

> When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.
>
> —MATTHEW 12:43–45, KJV

Demons grow tired outside of a body. Whatever their specific tasks may be, the activity becomes more strenuous for the demon when it is outside a human vessel. By contrast, when they are in a body, demons can possess great strength, as the following story attests:

> When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed

the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him.

—MARK 5:2–4, NLT

The Nephilim were "mighty men" and giants. That is why demon-possessed people can sometimes possess supernatural strength. It should not surprise us that spirits of giants can endow a person with physical strength well beyond their own natural capacity.

So it seems that demons are more effective when carrying out their purposes through a human vessel. The firmer their grasp upon the physical world, the more effective they can be. This is why they seek to possess people. They lost their giant bodies in the flood and now seek to inhabit men and women. But there are some people demons cannot possess.

7

Demons Cannot Possess Believers

Troops, it is best to avoid attempts to inhabit the believer, as nearness to them immediately brings about a tormenting and weakening effect. Keep your distance and instead fire your arrows of deception at them. We cannot possess them, but we can convince them to embrace false beliefs.

—SATAN

MANKIND IS TRIPARTITE, meaning we are made up of three parts: body, soul, and spirit. You are a spirit who has a soul that lives in a body. The apostle Paul wrote of this in his letter to the Thessalonians:

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

—1 THESSALONIANS 5:23, NLT

Before he is saved, a man's spirit is dead. But when we accept Christ, our spirits come alive in Him. This is why Jesus said in John 3:5 that a man must be born again of the spirit. Our spirit is what communicates with God, who is Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10–12). The spirit is where we experience inner fellowship with God. Demons cannot dwell there because "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). But something else happens when you are saved. Your body becomes the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

—1 CORINTHIANS 6:19, KJV

You interact with the earth through your body. This is why some theologians call the body your "earth suit." But if your body is God's temple, it can't be a dwelling place for demons. The Holy Spirit certainly doesn't want a demon as a roommate, and He wouldn't allow one to stay.

So we see that demonic beings cannot dwell in your spirit, and they cannot dwell in your body. This leaves your soul, which is your mind, will, and emotions. These are the components that make up your distinct personality. So can a Christian's soul be demon-possessed?

Scripture seems to indicate that demons seek bodies to inhabit, and the Bible doesn't talk about "soul possession," which leads me to believe that demons do not possess souls. If they did, demons would gain authority over a person's will, something that not even God allows Himself to take from us. Furthermore, if demons were looking for souls to inhabit, how could the demonic legion have possessed the pigs in Matthew 8? Pigs do not have souls.

Also, if one's spirit and body are dwelling places of the Holy Spirit, how could any demonic force have any level of comfort possessing the soul of the same?

Demons could not even approach Jesus without being tormented. I, therefore, must say that I see no biblical or logical reason to believe demons can possess a believer.

POSSESSION, OPPRESSION, AND THE REDEEMED

However, that doesn't mean that demons are powerless to influence the believer. They cannot possess the soul or the body, but they can attack the soul and the body. Yes, sadly, demonic beings *can* carry out successful assaults against Christians. They can assault us with fear, doubt, and worry, for instance, and they can affect us through sins we refuse to let go of. But just to be clear, I would not call such demonic success "possession" nor would I call it "oppression."

Some believers use the term *demonically oppressed* to describe a lower level of demonic influence on Christians. They'll say something such as, "Christians cannot be possessed, but they can be oppressed." This has become a common but incorrect view. Oppression, as it is most commonly

understood, is still a form of demonic dominance, so I don't believe a Christian can even be oppressed.

But this is, to some extent, a matter of semantics. Demons can most certainly affect believers. Otherwise, what meaning do we find in the biblical commands to be aware of our demonic foes? I usually avoid the term *oppression* because it is often associated with a kind of less powerful "possession." So instead of *oppression*, I prefer to use the word *attack*. For the believer, demonic attack may cause depression, loss of peace, confusion, and even feelings of condemnation. However, this is not the result of demonic ownership but of demonic assault. Demons can—and certainly will—be against believers but they cannot be in us. (How demons attack believers will be explored at length in part 2.)

On the issue of possession now, the reason some believe that Christians can be possessed is because some Christians *seem* to be under demonic possession. They scream and yell when the Word of God is being preached. They writhe on the floor in agony. They speak for the demonic being like the man in Mark 5 who cried, "Legion, for we are many." They growl, hiss, contort, shake, and rage.

It is one thing for a believer to appear weighed

down, confused, or otherwise discomforted by demonic assault. It's something else entirely for a believer to display signs of full-on demonic possession. That's an important distinction. Any believer can be affected by demonic assault and display the results of that assault. But no believer, biblically speaking, can be possessed.

Yet some act out the mannerism of a demoniac, one who is possessed by a demon. Yes, some who claim to be Spirit-filled sometimes demonstrate these extreme signs of demonic possession. And many have difficulty explaining that. If Christians cannot be demon-possessed, why do believers sometimes act as though they are? There really can be only one of two explanations: either they aren't really saved or they aren't really demon-possessed.

It's possible that a believer might become fearful or overcome with emotion. In fact, I have noticed obvious similarities between what is often mistakenly called "possession" and panic attacks that occur from anxiety. As you'll learn in later chapters, there is a relationship between demonic assault and issues such as anxiety and depression.

But it's also quite possible that so-called demonic manifestations are what some might call "self-

fulfilling prophecies." In other words, someone who battles anxiety can be so concerned with the possibility of his own demonic possession that he can work himself into a state of panic. This would then cause the squirming, uneasy feeling that is sometimes mistaken for demonic possession. This is exactly what you would expect from a panic attack. Furthermore, such an emotional frenzy might even cause a disruptive outburst.

People who tend to worry and make big deals out of small things are most prone to this kind of overreaction. Ironically, realizing the truth about one's own paranoia can feel almost as liberating as being freed from a demonic parasite.

In the end demon possession has to do with ownership. How can we belong to any other if we belong to Christ? As the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:23, "And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (KJV).

Because the Bible is clear, the matter should be settled: demons cannot possess believers. Christians can be emotional. Christians can even be convinced that they are demon-possessed. But Christians cannot actually be demon-possessed. The unbeliever, on the other hand, is a potential vessel for demonic beings.

Actually the unbeliever is already a slave in the kingdom of darkness.

8

Demons Want to Build Their Kingdom

Free yourself from celestial tyranny. Resist and rebel! Be audacious and stubborn. Separate yourself from the burdensome ordinances of the divine dictator. Step out from under the rule of God and be your own master. When you proudly stand against the Creator's authority, no being rules you.

—SATAN

THERE ARE ONLY two kingdoms: the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of darkness. We know that God the Father is the ultimate ruler of all and that Christ is seated at His right hand because the Bible tells us so:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

—COLOSSIANS 3:1, KJV

But the kingdom of darkness is also in operation. And though it is ultimately defeated, anyone who is not part of God's kingdom is under its control, as these verses attest:

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

—JOHN 8:34, KJV

We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one.

—1 JOHN 5:19, NLT

From their attempts to possess mankind and keep us enslaved to sin, it is obvious, once considered, that demonic beings desire to dominate mankind to

build their kingdom. Ever since Satan took man's dominion in the Garden of Eden, there has been an ongoing war between mankind and the forces of hell (Satan, fallen angels, and demons) for influence in the earth. We read of this in the Book of Acts:

> To open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.
>
> —ACTS 26:18, NLT

This battle is also being referenced in this verse from Ephesians:

> Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.
>
> —EPHESIANS 2:2, KJV

Satan wants to build his kingdom by tempting us to disobey God, just as he did to Adam and Eve. Through disobedience people become slaves. So Satan and his demonic forces have systematized their efforts to focus on one thing: causing man to disobey. Such systematized attacks are carried out in a very organized manner. Demonic beings work to

ensure that many stay blind and, therefore, prone to reject Christ.

But those who have been redeemed by Christ are no longer enslaved to the kingdom of darkness:

> Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.
>
> —COLOSSIANS 1:13, KJV

Many people avoid fully committing their lives to Christ because they believe the Christian life is limiting and oppressive. However, the truth is just the opposite. Without Christ, one is a slave to sin and is subject to a degrading and destructive lifestyle. Whether they realize it or not, those who live in sin are bound, not free. They are subjects of the kingdom of darkness.

A KINGDOM ROOTED IN REBELLION

The kingdom of darkness is rooted in rebellion. It is made up of all that resists the will of God. Because he was the first to rebel, Satan is the leader of the dark kingdom. Not even Jesus denies Satan's rule

over the sinful.

When tempting Jesus in the wilderness, Satan offered Him the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would worship him. Given that Christ is all-knowing, why would Satan offer Jesus all the nations of the world if they weren't his to give? It's very difficult to tempt someone with something they know you cannot give. Rather than deny that Satan could give Him the world, Christ instead chose to resist the devil's temptation. Jesus knows that Satan has influence in the earth through the kingdom of darkness.

Jesus also acknowledges that the demons are subject to the rule and authority of Satan. The religious people of Jesus's day watched Jesus cast demons out of people, and after seeing those exorcisms, the religious rulers accused Jesus of doing so under the authority of Satan. Jesus, of course, corrected the accusation while revealing Satan as the king of demons.

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub, and by the ruler of the demons He casts out demons." So He called them to Him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand."

—MARK 3:22–24

So Satan does, indeed, have some level of authority upon the earth because he was able to usurp it from man back in the Garden of Eden. Now those who live in sin are subject to that dominion. They become puppets through their disobedience, and they live out the will of Satan in the earth, thus giving him influence. (See again Ephesians 2:2.) However, though their authority is powerful, both Satan and his demons have limitations.

9

Demons Have Limitations

Tremble in fear, children of Adam, for you are only dust, and I am immensely powerful. Nothing eludes my knowledge. I can hear your thoughts and see your intentions. Knowing what tomorrow brings, I will outwit you. There is no place where you can hide from my influence or my gaze. Nor can you command me.

—SATAN

NO WARNING NEEDS to be given if there is no threat. So the fact that this book is devoted to discussing the nature and operation of demonic beings indicates that they command great power. It is foolish to be dismissive of the demonic. While some believers might brag about how easily they overcome the demonic foes, it is wise to exercise healthy caution. Not even Michael the archangel was frivolous in his approach to the spiritual forces of darkness.

> Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil in a dispute about the body of Moses, did not dare to pronounce upon him a railing judgment. But he said, "The Lord rebuke you!"
>
> —JUDE 9

While maintaining keen judgment, we must deem spiritual conflict perilous. No soldier, no matter how grand or powerful his army may be, will ever casually step foot into a raging conflict. Only the unwise underestimate their enemy. If a believer treats the battleground like a playground—or a platform upon which he can show off his spiritual strength—defeat is inevitable. We mustn't engage in spiritual battle to be praised, nor should we use spiritual warfare as entertainment. Using spiritual warfare to

get attention makes one a showman, not a soldier. Addicted to the compliments and admiration of men, many professing demon experts do little more than involve themselves in fights they do not realize they're losing. Such arrogant and facetious behavior comes naturally from those who underestimate the demonic.

Nonetheless, there is another extreme we must deliberately avoid: we must not cower in the face of the demonic. We must neither underestimate the power of the demonic nor exaggerate it. We must maintain a balanced perspective of the kingdom of darkness. Yes, demons have great power, but they also have limitations.

How do we overestimate the power of demons? We should not place exclusive blame on demons for every negative outcome we experience. Sometimes tragedy just happens, and sometimes, without the aid of demonic beings, we are simply inconvenienced. There is no need to live in a state of constant paranoia, wondering what demonic assault lurks just around the next corner.

The devil is not God's equal opposite, and demons are not without their own hindrances. Based upon Scripture, there are several limitations that we can

safely suppose. In this chapter we will explore these limitations:

- Demons cannot read minds.
- Demons cannot see the future.
- Demons cannot be omnipresent.
- Demons cannot resist believers' commands.

DEMONS CANNOT READ MINDS

If Satan or his demons had the remarkable ability to read minds, they would not have encouraged the crucifixion of Christ, for they would have known God's ultimate plan through the mind of Jesus. Furthermore, the Bible says this:

> Then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and render to everyone according to all his ways, whose hearts You know—for only You know the hearts of the sons of men.
>
> —1 KINGS 8:39

The power to cast a knowing gaze upon the hearts of men belongs exclusively to God. Satan and demonic beings cannot do the same. Demons are unable to see into people's minds.

However, though demons cannot read your thoughts, they certainly can influence your thoughts. It works the same as with anyone else. For example, you're currently reading a book that I have written. As you move your eyes across this page, words are filling your mind. I cannot see you right now, and I definitely do not know what you're thinking. Still, here we are. I am putting words into your mind. Your thoughts have an inner voice, and that voice is saying, right at this very moment, exactly what I wanted it to say.

So there. I just influenced your thoughts, and we're not even face to face. How much better do you think demons are at influencing your thoughts? They've studied mankind for thousands of years, and they are highly intelligent beings.

Analyzing your posture, tone of voice, mood, words, and overall demeanor, demons can tell, with incredible accuracy, what is going on inside you. They make use of the outer clues. I even suspect that, like modern medical equipment, they can see the kind of activity that occurs in your brain (though not your mind). They can see your blood flow and hear your heart rate. Obsessively examining every detail, paying attention to the slightest of your body's

movement, demons are able to make predictions about how you'll respond to any one of their strategies.

Demons may not be able to read your thoughts, but they can read you.

DEMONS CANNOT SEE THE FUTURE

A similar explanation can be applied to how demons predict the future. They gather data and process intel. They diligently watch indicators and conditions, giving themselves forecasts, just as we do with the weather, the economy, and other systems. But they cannot see the future. Only God can do that. We read in the Book of Isaiah:

> Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.
>
> —ISAIAH 46:9–10, KJV

God can declare the end from the beginning, and

there is no one else like Him. Sure, there are examples of fortunetelling and divination in the Bible. But even those acts of witchcraft are limited to the ability of the demonic beings behind them. The demon's ability to predict the future is based upon its sharp intellect, systematic methods of foretelling, and data analysis. In other words, they make educated guesses. Only God can, with absolute certainty, know the future.

DEMONS CANNOT BE OMNIPRESENT

Demons primarily dwell in bodies, and as we've learned, they wander the earth when they've been expelled from a human vessel. Neither Satan nor his demons can be in more than one place at a time.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and the Adversary also came among them. And the LORD said to the Adversary, "From where have you come?" Then the Adversary answered the LORD, saying, "From roaming on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

—JOB 1:6–7

This passage in Job is just one instance in which Satan is described as moving about the earth. One does not need to ever move if he is everywhere at all times. In fact, one *cannot* move about if he is everywhere at all times. It is safe to conclude that, biblically speaking, Satan and his demons are not omnipresent.

I often receive correspondence from people who sincerely believe they have been attacked by Satan himself. Setting aside the more practical considerations of whether the devil would take the time to attack them personally, it's possible that they believe this because they imagine him to possess God-like omnipresence. As we have seen, this is not the case. But some also point to 1 Peter 5:8, which tells us to be sober and vigilant because our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (KJV).

However, this verse isn't referring to Satan's personal attack. We know that because one non-omnipresent being could not possibly be efficient enough to attack millions of believers all around the world all at once. Instead, we are to be on guard against his minions. For example, we often credit Adolf Hitler for the Holocaust, but none of us actually

think he personally saw to each and every evil perpetrated at that time. Instead, we understand that his responsibility came from his power and influence. The same is true of Satan.

DEMONS CANNOT RESIST THE BELIEVER'S COMMANDS

Unless the believer surrenders his authority through disobedience, sin, compromise, or other open doors, demons are powerless to resist the believer's command. (We will discuss this at greater length in part 3.) Time and time again we read of Jesus dispelling demonic beings with little to no resistance, such as in this verse from the Book of Matthew.

> When the evening came, they brought to Him many who were possessed with demons. And He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all who were sick.
>
> —MATTHEW 8:16

Let's look closely at what this verse is showing us. Jesus often drew crowds of thousands. But let's conservatively assume that the crowd that gathered around Jesus in this case numbered in the hundreds.

Jesus expelled demons from many people, and He healed *all* who were sick. We know that Jesus could not have spent the entire day doing so, because He began to pray for people "when the evening came." So He didn't even begin to minister to people until the second half of the day.

Had Jesus spent more than a few minutes with each individual who sought His help, it is unlikely that He could have prayed for even most of the people and certainly not "all who were sick." It's clear that Christ spent only seconds, minutes at most, casting out demons. That's power!

Following the example of Christ, I do not waste my time talking to demons or trying to discover their names. I stand in the authority I have been given through Christ and tell the demon to leave.

In Matthew 8:16, it was with a simple command that Christ expelled demons, nothing more. At this point one might think, "But that was Jesus. Of course He was able to expel demons instantly. He was the Son of God!"

We must remember that Christ has given us His exact level of power to cast out demons. There is nothing diluted about or missing from the spiritual authority that has been divinely imparted to the

believer. You carry exactly what Jesus carried.

> These signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues.
>
> —MARK 16:17

So why do demons seem to linger even after a believer prays for the person who is demon-possessed? Well, when I am asked to cast a demon out of someone, I will first try to determine whether or not that individual is actually possessed. If when I pray in the name of Jesus, the individual continues to exhibit behavior that is indicative of demon possession, I can biblically conclude only one of three things:

- The individual does not want to be free.
- The demon is the kind that requires prayer and fasting.
- The individual is not really possessed and is just emotional.

If the individual doesn't want to be free, I do not expel the demon. Sometimes people resist deliverance because they don't want to let go of what caused them to become bound in the first place. For example, sometimes demons enter through an "open

door" of unforgiveness. If the demon-possessed person is fighting to hang on to his hate, he is indirectly fighting to hang on to the demon. I do not commence with the exorcism if the person doesn't want to be free. If I were to cast it out in that case, the person would only end up seven times worse, as the demon would return to find the person still unsaved and void of the Holy Spirit.

If you'll recall, Jesus told us this very truth:

> Then it goes and brings with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it be also with this evil generation.
>
> —MATTHEW 12:45

In those cases it's best to wait for the individual to willingly seek the deliverance from demonic torment or possession.

Secondly, if the demon is the kind that comes out only through prayer and fasting, I stop the prayer session and inform those involved of the need to fast. We see an example of this kind of demon in the Book of Mark:

> And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

—MARK 9:29, KJV

This was actually the case with one of the first demons I expelled from someone. What started as a simple prayer during a Bible study turned into a dramatic clash between heaven and hell. I went to pray for a man and asked him to join hands with me. When he grabbed my hands, he began to tremble and groan. With his grip tightening on my fingers, he stared at me while his face contorted into an angry sneer. After praying for him for about three hours, I realized that he wasn't yet delivered. I instructed him to go and pray. Then I got a few believers to commit to fasting for him. It wasn't until about a week later that he was brought to my church, where I prayed for him. That night he was delivered. To this day he still travels and shares this incredible testimony.

Thirdly, if I am praying for someone who believes himself to be demon-possessed and the demon doesn't appear to be submitting to my commands, I am usually inclined to conclude that there is no demon possession after all. In other words, if you are dealing with a real demon, it will know its obligation to obey you as a born-again believer. I must stress, however, that it's beneficial to decide this to be the

case only after a process of elimination. If the individual really does want to be free and you've fasted for his or her deliverance, then this must be the case. But to ensure that a demon-possessed person isn't deceived into thinking that he or she is "free," make sure you've exhausted the other possibilities first.

Demons must obey you when you are filled with the Holy Spirit and living clean. For when you live a Spirit-filled life, you carry the authority of heaven upon your shoulders. Christ's power over demonic beings is so absolute that not only can it remove demons from where they do not belong, but it can also send them places they do not want to go. Yes, we are so mightily empowered that we can tell demons where to go.

So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine."

—MATTHEW 8:31

Whether they like it or not, demonic beings are not allowed to resist your commands.

10

Demons Are Tormented by God's Presence

Troops, nothing is more tormenting than existing within a vessel that comes to experience the sense of God's presence. Violently seek to avoid such experiences.

—SATAN

IN ADDITION TO having limitations on their abilities, demons also have weaknesses in their nature. One

important weakness to note is that demons are tormented, on every level, by the presence of God. And unfortunately for demons God is omnipresent, which means He is everywhere at all times.

I know we often hear about God's omnipresent nature, but I want you to consider how truly marvelous it is for God to exist everywhere at all times. He is not constrained to the laws of time and space that govern us. There is no place you can go to escape His awareness. Man's collective intellect is far too insufficient to even begin to understand the wonderful presence of God. That He can be everywhere at all times is astounding.

The Bible teaches us that God is the unrivaled Sovereignty.

> Where shall I go from Your spirit, or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell at the end of the sea, even there Your hand shall guide me, and Your right hand shall take hold of me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light shall be as night about me," even the darkness is not dark to You, but the night shines as the day, for the darkness is like light to You.
>
> —PSALM 139:7–12

Demons are uncomfortable in God's presence, and

because God is everywhere at all times, demons live in a constant state of unrest. Their very knowledge of God's existence causes them to tremble (James 2:19).

The Bible tells us that God is a triune being. He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one and equally God.

> There are three who testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and the three are one.
>
> —1 JOHN 5:7

Just as God exists in three persons, so His presence exists in three expressions. There's the omnipresence of God (God everywhere). Additionally there is the indwelling presence of God (the Holy Spirit in you), and the manifested presence of God (the tangible presence of God).

The indwelling presence of God is the Holy Spirit within you. You are the abiding place, the habitation of the Spirit (Rom. 8:11).

The manifested presence of God is that presence you can sometimes sense in your physical body or emotions. This expression of God's presence is most commonly experienced in times of private and public prayer. It is that tangible atmosphere that you might

experience in a church service, revival meeting, or any other situation in which you are cultivating an awareness of God's presence. The manifested presence of God isn't always felt, but there are special moments when it is undeniable.

So are the three expressions of God's presence found in the Bible as I've described them to you? Yes.

When it comes to God's omnipresence, we already read King David's psalm—Psalm 139—which is a poetic commentary on the omnipresence of God. But King David also wrote of the indwelling and manifested presence of God. He did so when he was repenting before the Lord. (See Psalm 51:11.)

King David, who knew that God is everywhere at all times, begged to not be banished from God's presence. If King David knew that he could never find a place where God doesn't exist, what did he mean when he begged to not be banished from God's presence? He was writing of God's manifested presence, the expression of God's presence that we experience in the natural realm. The manifested presence of God is sensed when God's omnipresence tangibly affects the natural realm. King David didn't want to be removed from that sense of God's

presence, that divine atmosphere that surrounds those who walk in spiritual depths. He knew there was a sense of the presence that could be removed from him.

He also prayed, "Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me," which tells us that King David was filled with the Holy Spirit. So King David understood the omnipresence of God (Ps. 139:7–12), the manifested presence of God (Ps. 51:11), and the indwelling presence of God (Ps. 51:11).

The omnipresence of God touches everything, including the physical world. He is aware of every hair on your head, every blade of grass, every grain of sand, every drop of water, every molecule—everything. That is settled quite well in Scripture.

We read of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the writings of Paul the Apostle, and in the Book of Acts we see the Holy Spirit dwelling within the members of the early church.

And the manifested presence of God? The Bible gives account after account of the experiences of mighty servants of God, men and women who were marked by encounters with God's manifested presence. Moses sat face to face with the manifested presence of God. The three young Jewish men stood

alongside the visible image of the Son of God in King Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. I could go on.

So how do these three expressions of God's presence affect demonic beings? The omnipresence of God is a pervasive, unavoidable reality for demonic beings. It keeps them in a state of unrest and anxiety. The very thought of the existence of God troubles them deeply.

However, the manifested presence of God and the indwelling presence of God only trouble demonic beings in specific circumstances. But the reaction is much stronger in those cases.

Because demons are more interested in people than they are in physical places or objects, they don't experience the manifested presence of God (which affects the physical realm) unless the person they are influencing experiences that manifestation of God's presence. Generally speaking, demons experience the physical world through the people they are influencing or have possessed.

When a demonically influenced person begins to experience the presence of God, the demonic being becomes tormented. That tangible presence, which manifests in times of ministry, prayer, or worship, is what causes demon-possessed people to burst into

furious tantrums (often during church services). Uncomfortable in God's presence, the demon invokes the possessed to exhibit distracting and frightening behavior, likely hoping such disruptions will cause the possessed to be kicked out of the church service, thus preventing him from becoming free of demonic influence.

You'll see similar reactions from demon-possessed people when they are near a Spirit-filled believer. The stronger the manifested presence becomes on a believer in any given moment, the stronger the reaction will be in the affected demoniac.

So the omnipresence of God keeps demonic beings in a constant and agonizing state of fear, the indwelling presence of God evicts them from human vessels (remember that demons cannot dwell in believers), and the manifested presence of God can cause them to dramatically respond in furious and chaotic outbursts. Demons are tormented by the presence of God.

11

Demons Organize

Troops, we must focus our every resource and ability to wage a collective and massive strike against the children of God. It is our order that will bring to them disorder.

—SATAN

IN EPHESIANS 1 we are given a definitive understanding of spiritual rank.

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

—EPHESIANS 1:19–23, NLT

The Book of Ephesians makes a clear distinction between the "heavenly realms" where Jesus rules and the "high places" where demonic powers have dominion (Eph. 6:12). As ruler of the heavenly realms, Christ has the highest position. In Ephesians 2:2, we are told that the devil is the "prince of the power of the air" (KJV). Satan possesses authority in the sub-heavenly realm, the "air." In other words, Satan has influence in the earth.

To understand this fully, we must look at the very first verse of Scripture:

In the beginning God created the *heavens* and the earth.

—GENESIS 1:1, NLT, EMPHASIS ADDED

The wording in many Bible translations shows that

there is a plurality to heaven. In fact, Paul the Apostle reveals that there are at least three realms of the heavens.

> This boasting will do no good, but I must go on. I will reluctantly tell about visions and revelations from the Lord. I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don't know—only God knows. Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. But I do know that I was caught up to paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell.
>
> —2 CORINTHIANS 12:1–4, NLT

In Scripture we are told of three heavens:

1. Earth's atmosphere, or the sky (Gen. 6:7; Ps. 8:8; James 5:18)
2. The cosmos, including the sun, moon, and stars (Jer. 8:2; Ps. 8:3–4)
3. God's dwelling place (Deut. 10:14; 2 Cor. 12:1–4)

Satan is the prince of the power of the air, as in earth's atmosphere. Here is an interesting side note to consider: Call it poetic justice if you will, but the "air" over which Satan rules is the same air where the

Lord will meet us upon His triumphant return (1 Thess. 4:17). My point: There is a difference between Christ's sphere of influence—"heavenly realms"—and Satan's sphere—"the air." For the time, Satan has some influence in "the air" or earth's realm.

With this in mind, let's look at Ephesians 6:12.

> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
>
> —KJV

In this verse we find that there are four aspects to the structure of demonic rule:

1. Principalities
2. Powers
3. Rulers of the darkness of this world
4. Spiritual wickedness in high places

We'll take a look at each of these.

Principalities

Many teach that a principality is a strong demon, but that is not exactly true. Every principality is

overseen by a strong demon, but a principality itself is, spiritually speaking, actually a region that is under the control and influence of a demonic prince. The principality is the place, and the prince is the powerful demon in charge of the place. That is a subtle distinction to be made.

Though certain regions of the world (cities, nations, ritual sites) can become "demonically influenced," it's important to note that demonic beings are not necessarily interested in influencing places; they are interested in influencing people. Demons gain influence over regions by gaining influence over people, not physical locations. In other words, demons don't exactly attach themselves to soil, buildings, etc.

If a demon can influence a person, it can affect everything that person impacts. Through varying degrees of influence over people, demons gain control over regions. Within these regions (principalities), there is a heightened demonic influence.

And Satan, the prince of the power of the air, is the overall ruler of these regions. Satan rules these regions through his loyal "prince demons" (strong demons that are assigned to and oversee

principalities). We see an example of a demonic prince in the Book of Daniel.

> But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia.
>
> —DANIEL 10:13, NLT

So while Jesus is the King of kings, Satan is the prince of princes—a lesser ruler indeed. To reiterate: though principalities can be representative of high-ranking demons, the word *principality* is a direct reference not to prince demons but to the regions they rule. The principality is the region, and the prince is the overseer of that region. And, ultimately, Satan masters the prince demons.

Powers

Next, we see the word *powers*. We are context-clued into its meaning in the second chapter of Ephesians:

> Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.
>
> —EPHESIANS 2:2, KJV

Satan is the prince *of* the power of the air, not the prince *and* the power of the air. The "power of the air" isn't a title for Satan, and it isn't a person. Satan rules over the power, so he himself cannot be the "power." The power is the entire system of the kingdom of hell. Thus, hell is broken down into a basic chain of command (power), and that power is organized into different regions (principalities). Just as "the government" describes a complex working of people, places, and operations, so does "power of the air" describe the overall, organized system of hell.

Rulers and wickedness

Further breaking down Ephesians 6:12, we see the rulers of the darkness of this world. The word "rulers" is describing spiritual personal beings. The rulers are demonic spirits, and the spiritual wickedness in high places is the collective of ranked demons. It's possible that the fallen angels that remain unchained are among those higher-ranking demons existing as "spiritual wickedness in high places." Perhaps demons are the ground troops and fallen angels are the air support. (Fallen angels existing in "high places" might also be the ones mistaken for "alien beings." See the appendix for

more on the connection between demons and "aliens.")

So, to recap:

- Principalities = regions
- Powers = the systems of hell
- Rulers of the darkness of this world = demons
- Spiritual wickedness in high places = ranked demons (possibly fallen angels)

DEMONIC HIERARCHY

From Ephesians 6:12 we can conclude that the kingdom of darkness is organized into regions and it is systematized. In fact, the Book of Daniel tells us of spiritual warfare that took place in the "high places." This warfare hindered Daniel's prayers.

Then he said, "Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia."

—DANIEL 10:12–13, NLT

The spirit prince of Persia was a demonic being that had been assigned as head of that region. Remember that prince demons *represent* principalities. However, prince demons can themselves be called "spiritual wickedness in high places." So we know that high-ranking demons are given assignment over larger regions. It isn't too far of a stretch to then believe that demonic powers and principalities are further broken down by region and rank. This means that there is a comprehensive system of ranking starting with Satan and going down to the lowliest of demons.

There is another insightful biblical text that tells us more about demonic organization. In Mark 9 the disciples were confronted by a demonic being that was too strong for them to cast out of a little boy. The boy was tormented by this being, and the boy's father looked to Jesus for answers.

So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth. "How long has this been happening?" Jesus asked the boy's father. He replied, "Since he was a little boy. The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if

you can."

"What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes." The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. "Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak," he said. "I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!"

Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, "He's dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up. Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, "Why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit?" Jesus replied, "This kind can be cast out only by prayer.

—MARK 9:20–29, NLT

The moment Jesus approached the demon-possessed boy, the demonic being began to act in a childish manner, causing the boy to convulse. As Jesus saw that the "crowd of onlookers was growing," He exercised His authority over the demonic being, causing it to come out of the boy. Surely He wanted to demonstrate His power for all to see. Later in private the disciples approached Jesus and asked Him why they were unable to expel the demonic being. He tells them that "this kind can be cast out only by prayer." Other times Jesus would

cast out demonic beings with a simple command (Matt. 8:16). But the one from the story in Mark 9 could be expelled only by prayer (and fasting according to the King James Version). This shows us that not only was the demon more powerful than other demons but it was also of a different *kind*.

Within the organization of the kingdom of darkness, there are various kinds and power levels of demonic beings. Earlier in this book I referenced a portion of Scripture that I want to revisit here to point out another truth about demons. Jesus said:

> When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through dry places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it be also with this evil generation.
>
> —MATTHEW 12:43–45

We see in this passage that a demon will gather unto itself seven other demons that are "more evil than itself." So not only are demonic beings ranked by power and categorized by "kind," but they also have different levels of wickedness. The Bible does not go into detail about exactly how these categories

and ranks are applied to real-life spirituality. But the Bible does make mention of varying kinds of demonic beings:

- *Seducing spirits* (1 Tim. 4:1)—These are demonic spirits that seduce people away from faith in Christ by means of demonic doctrines (i.e., Islam, Buddhism, atheism, etc.). Hosea calls this kind of demon a "spirit of whoredoms" (Hosea 5:4, KJV). In short, they are spirits of idolatry.
- *Spirits of infirmity* (Luke 13:11)—These are demonic spirits that attack the body and cause sickness. It's important to note that not all sickness is directly caused by a demonic being. For instance, in 1 Timothy 5:23 the apostle Paul makes no reference to demonic involvement when he counsels Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach problem and frequent infirmities.
- *Miracle-working spirits* (Rev. 16:14)—These are demonic spirits that perform miraculous acts in order to persuade people against the truth.
- *Spirits of divination* (Acts 16:16)—These

demonic spirits influence through the occult. They are behind psychics, necromancy, new age mysticism, manipulation, bitterness, and the like.
• *The devourer* (Mal. 3:11)—This is a demonic spirit (or possibly spirits) that causes loss of financial and other resources.

Though I am certain that there are some types of demons I have missed or that aren't specifically mentioned in Scripture, those listed here can give you some idea of how demons are organized. It seems that they are assigned specific tasks and missions. But their organization goes beyond their categorization.

12

Demons Strategize

Troops, let us make use of the knowledge we have amassed over the ages. Observe mankind. Watch them closely. Pay attention to how they respond to your every act. What traps do they fall for again and again? What words make them feel defeated and discouraged? Use daily whatever is most effective. Make wise use of your fleeting time. Be strategic and plan.

—SATAN

DEMONS COOPERATE WITH one another to accomplish their work. So their organization allows for both categorization and cooperation. Look again at Jesus's insightful words in Matthew's Gospel:

> When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.
>
> —MATTHEW 12:43–45, KJV

When a demon has found a point of weakness, it will take "with himself seven other spirits." When demonic beings lose a spiritual battle, they call in reinforcements. This means that communication flows among the ranks of Satan's kingdom.

I want to make one more observation about that very helpful text in Matthew:

> When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, *I will*. . .
>
> —MATTHEW 12:43–44, KJV, EMPHASIS ADDED

He says, "*I will. . .*" Though they are part of a larger group of ungodly beings, demons have wills of their own. They are conscious, thinking beings that can make observations and decisions. In their individual actions each demonic being is an extension of Satan himself. Because Satan is not omnipresent like God, he must carry out his purposes vicariously. So, as we've learned, when the Scripture tells us to watch out for our enemy, it is essentially telling us to watch out for demonic beings in general.

So far as we've explored, we know that demons strategize in cooperation with one another, systematically check for weak points, call for reinforcements, and make plans concerning you (they are individual and self-willed).

Furthermore, demons' abilities to communicate and think for themselves lead me to conclude that they are symbiotic in their strategies. The larger goals are overseen by Satan, whereas the minor goals are left to the responsibility of individual demons. However, even at the lower ranks, demons strategize. This means that demonic beings communicate and strategize concerning you. Part of that strategy includes their tenacious tendency to return again and again. They are persistent.

One of the most chilling declarations made by a demonic being may very well be: "I will return into my house from whence I came out" (Matt. 12:44, KJV). The fact that demons return to their former slaves is a sobering but scriptural reality. Demonic beings, after experiencing defeat, return to the place of the battle to see if they are able to reenter. They come back to see if you've become more susceptible to their attacks. They return to spy on your devotion to God's Word, your prayer life, and your commitment to holy living. They obsess over your spiritual state of being.

But so long as a person is saved and Spirit-filled, a demon can never fully regain its ownership in that individual. However, this doesn't mean that a demonic being can't return to attack the believer. For the rest of your Christian life you will be targeted by demonic powers and singled out for attack. This is a key distinction to remember: demons cannot own you, but they can affect you.

So just how *can* they affect a Spirit-filled believer?

PART II

Operations
Exposing and Resisting Your Enemy

THIS SECTION WILL help you gain a tactical advantage over the forces of hell. Many believers are unaware of how often they are being demonically attacked. You may be surprised by not only the frequency of attacks but also the seemingly ordinary nature of those attacks. The battle in the spirit is more closely tied to your everyday life than you might think. So I wish now to expose and demystify hell's attacks, most of which are based in deception.

To help you understand how a demon affects the believer, remember these two general rules of

engagement:

1. *Demons cannot control; they can only suggest.* They cannot take control of your will or take ownership of you. They can only vocalize lies that influence you to act in certain ways. At all times you have the free will to stop acting according to their persistent suggestions.
2. *Demons can cause only indirect physical harm.* Demons can use the ills of the fallen world to attack you physically through sickness or violent, demonically influenced people. But they cannot personally assault you as you might see in movies, where demons claw at people or kill them. Demonic beings need natural, physical agents to perform natural, physical attacks.

Demons are not all powerful and when they are resisted, they will flee. The more we know about how demons operate, the better equipped we will be to resist their lies and temptations. As you discover how your enemy operates, you will also learn highly effective strategies for counterattacks.

13

Demons Look for Open Doors

Don't concern yourself with what you do. Live for today and forget everything else. Embrace only the moment, and do not consider your future, neither here on earth or in eternity. Indulge in the pleasures of this world. Seek all forms of gratification. In this way you unlock the door to your life.

—SATAN

I HAD AN EERIE dream one night. Within my dream I awoke in my bed with a heavy gasp. The moment my eyes opened, I sat straight up. Startled and filled with a sense of panic, I began to look back and forth across the room. Though initially I could not see him, I could sense that someone else was in the room with me; something evil was present. Though not completely frozen in fear, I knew something was wrong. The unusual atmosphere made me feel threatened, intimidated. I was barely able to move.

While glancing around, I found myself captivated by a vague presence standing beside my bed. The longer I looked, the more its shape became distinct. Immediately I discerned it to be a demonic presence. Though its appearance was still somewhat vague, the being looked like a dark cloud. It was an ever-shifting shadow and within it were eyes and teeth floating about in the center. It hovered quietly beside my bed and, as if to taunt me, fixed its gaze on me. All the while it wore a menacing and unnatural smile.

Quite shaken, I had to make a deliberate effort to regain my spiritual poise. I adjusted my frightened self to take on a courageous posture. Knowing the Holy Spirit's power, I wasted no time in exercising

my authority over the demonic being. I raised my voice and began to command it to leave. Yet, to my surprise, the demon just stayed there, floating in the midst of my room, still smiling at me. This time more emphatically I again raised my voice and began commanding the demon to leave. Frustrated, perplexed and, yes, terrified that the demon wasn't responding, I declared, "You have no right to be here! You need to go right now in the name of the Lord Jesus."

The demon remained.

I repeated, "You have no right to be here!"

In an almost jovial tone the evil spirit mocked, "Yes, I do. I have every right to be here." It spoke no audible words yet it was able to communicate with me. I don't know how I understood what it was telling me, but somehow I did understand it.

I was shocked when it insisted that it had the right to be there in my room. Baffled, I reluctantly inquired, "And why is that?" Its answer only confused me further. Calmly and matter-of-factly it responded, "Necromancy." Even in my dream state I was perplexed. I knew I wasn't participating in necromancy. I had *never* even so much as attempted to dabble in that occult practice. Furthermore, I

could think of no one in my family who participated in necromancy, which is the sinful act of communicating with the dead. (In fact, those who commit such witchcraft are actually communicating with demons that *pretend* to be the dead.)

At that point I was more puzzled than I was petrified. I pressed further, "What do you mean?" Again in a stoic tone, the demon spoke, "Ask the one who speaks with the dead."

Then I woke up.

Though the dream was very unpleasant, I am thankful that the Lord will shine light on these spiritual matters through dreams. I don't know if I had really encountered a demonic being in my dream or if the entire dream was a message directly from the Lord. Either way, something from the spirit had surfaced itself in my subconscious state. The Bible tells us it is not unlike God to send us warnings or messages in our dreams.

For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.

—JOB 33:14–16, KJV

God speaks to us through dreams. Then it's up to us to discern what He is saying and act upon it. Of course, not every strange dream has spiritual significance. The Holy Spirit helps us to discern the importance of each dream. But once we know that God is truly speaking through a dream, it is in our best interest to respond to it in a timely manner.

The dream I had caused me to sense a very ugly presence, a deep darkness around me. It was the kind of evil that brings about great heaviness and an almost nauseating discomfort. Profoundly affected by my strange dream, I called my aunt the next day. I knew to call her because she played a key role in teaching me about prayer and spiritual warfare. When I was a new convert, I attended her Tuesday night prayer meetings faithfully and gained a solid foundation for my prayer life. I was confident that even if she didn't understand the dream herself, she could at least get me thinking in the right direction.

So I told her my dream in detail and explained, "I don't participate, nor have I ever participated, in necromancy. But for this spirit to have an open door to me, I think that the door had to have been opened by someone in our family. Otherwise, how could this being have access to my life?"

She didn't hesitate for even a moment. She immediately knew who my dream was about. Unknown to me, this was actually an ongoing issue in the family. Generations ago members of my family participated in the occult and were even in a place of influence in the occult. That's not something I'm proud to report, but it gives you the full context for this incident. Because of my family's history with satanic rituals, some of the demonic practices had passed through the generations as normal traditions. Those practices are now, for the most part, nonexistent in my family. However, some distant relatives still participate in those kinds of rituals, many of them unaware of the demonic nature of the practices. I thank God that my grandparents gave their hearts to the Lord. In doing so, they started a new, godly legacy for my family.

My aunt was more informed about the family history than I was. I was naïve to think all of the occult practices had been completely stopped. My aunt and I prayed together and closed the door that had been left open. I don't know how that open door might have affected me in my everyday life, but I wasn't willing to find out. I was sure God gave the warning for a reason.

Whether a demon is seeking to attack a believer or master a nonbeliever, it will search for empty spaces and, true to its parasitic nature, will attempt to fill any spiritual vacuum. Matthew 12:44 tells us that the demon "findeth it empty, swept, and garnished" (KJV). If something is swept and garnished, that means it has been cleaned and decorated. It's well kept.

In the case of the unbeliever everything may look clean and complete on the outside. The person may seem to have it all together. One can have his life in moral, financial, and psychological order, but that won't matter if he is empty. Demons, observant and without mercy, seek to fill any empty space. So a life that is void of the Holy Spirit is vacant to spirits of all other kinds. Only a life that is filled with the Spirit of God is off-limits to demonic ownership.

In the case of the believer, we too must be vigilant. While we cannot open a door to ownership, we can most certainly open a door that makes a demonic attack more effective. The Bible says, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12, KJV).

Perhaps you have been "swept and garnished." That order, that finely tuned state of life is what gives

us the confidence to be at ease. Yes, you belong to God and are filled with the Holy Spirit. Yes, you have the authority to command the forces of darkness. Yes, God lives within you. But as the Scriptures teach, you still must remain on guard. The enemy looks for open doors through which he gains an influence over us, and with that influence he will attempt to steal, kill, and destroy. This is why we must remain spiritually alert.

ANY WAY IN WILL DO

An open door is an entry point for demonic spirits to gain access to and influence in your life. There are many doors we might unintentionally open. Mind-altering drugs, ungodly music, pornographic imagery, secret sin, spiritual compromise, perverted actions, occult rituals, and various other ungodly behaviors can all become open doors to the enemy.

For instance, something as simple as anger can make you vulnerable to demonic influence. Have you noticed that when you're angry it's easier to say and do harmful things? Just as it is easier to hear God's voice in an atmosphere of worship, so it is easier to

hear a demonic suggestion when in a state of anger.

> And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.
>
> —EPHESIANS 4:26–27, NLT

Anger makes it easier to say hurtful things that we do not mean, bring up people's mistakes, degrade others, and hurl insults. Doesn't that sound like the work of the enemy?

Negative emotions, obscene movies, filthy atmospheres, insulting words, unforgiveness—those are just some examples of doors we can open to invite demonic influence. Even though demons cannot have ownership over you, when you open these doors, you make yourself vulnerable to believe their deceptive whispers and sinful suggestions.

Open doors may also be found in your relationships. For example, if a demonic being cannot get you to believe his lies, he may be able to deceive your spouse. And if your spouse begins to live under depression, confusion, or fear, it affects you. I also have noticed demonic attack on believers who are approaching dating in an ungodly way. If the relationship you are in is bringing about emotional

torment, ask yourself if you've opened an emotional door to someone who is himself under emotional attack. If you invest emotionally in someone who is being attacked emotionally then you open a door to being attacked emotionally yourself.

Open doors can also be found, as I mentioned previously, in music. Music moves you emotionally. There's nothing wrong or sinful about being moved emotionally through music. But if the music's message is ungodly and you make yourself emotionally vulnerable to that message, should it surprise you if you are attacked in your emotions? And what about the suggestions of ungodly lyrics? If you hear lies over and over again, that message gains influence over you. If faith comes by hearing the Word of God, then what comes by hearing the lies of the enemy?

Open an emotional door to demonic influence and you'll be attacked emotionally. Open a physical door and you'll be attacked physically. Maybe you won't be attacked by a demon itself, but a demon can use the harmful things of the natural world. One may believe for divine healing, but things such as gluttony, laziness, and foolishness may bring about or worsen sickness. While some aspects of your health are not

under our own control and while God promises healing, unhealthy living is an open door for a demonic attack of sickness.

There are also some open doors that make you vulnerable to a demonic mental assault. Obsessing over negative things, participating in recreational drug use or drunkenness—those acts of the will open the door to spiritual attack. When you live in a state of always thinking negatively, everything about you—your perspective, your words, your demeanor—becomes negative. When you alter your consciousness with drugs or alcohol, you are more prone to do things you'll regret. Such abuse isn't known to make a person act more wisely. (For more on demons and drug use, see the appendix.)

Demonic beings seek to influence you through the thoughts your mind thinks, the sights your eyes see, the words your ears hear, and the actions your hands take. You know you've opened a demonic door when there is a profound and prolonged lack of peace, joy, love, patience, or clarity. In some cases you may also find yourself mentally and emotionally assaulted while you're trying to pray, worship, or read the Scriptures.

Close the door on the enemy by ceasing to do the

actions that gave him access. Pause for a moment now and ask the Holy Spirit to point out any open doors in your life. Be honest with Him, and be honest with yourself. Close doors in prayer until the negative effects subside. For instance, you may want to pray something like this:

Precious Holy Spirit, reveal to me my spiritual vulnerabilities. Search my heart, mind, soul, and being. Remove the veil. I lay my soul bare before Your knowing gaze. For the spiritual doors that I have opened, I take responsibility and repent. I shut the doors in the wonderful name of Jesus. Spirit of the living God, give me the grace to keep these spiritual doors closed. I commit to this. Thank You for a fresh start. Thank You that Your mercies aren't just new every morning but also every moment. Thank You for Your grace and mercy. I pray this in the matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

From this moment forward, refuse to give the enemy even an inch of ground in your life and relationships. Take your full dominion, identify the demonic access point, and then slam the door in that demon's face. And then on a continual basis actively search for open doors and close them as soon as they are revealed to you.

14

Demons Deceive

Troops, deception should be your weapon of choice. The believer has more power than you or me, so you must ensure that he doesn't know that. The only chance we have of defeating mankind is to deceive the Christian into thinking we have the upper hand.

—SATAN

WHEN IT COMES to the believer, demons do not always use their hands; they focus on using the power of their words. What I mean by that is demons prefer to inflict damage to the mind and the soul rather than the body.

The most effective form of demonic attack mainly deals with words or ideas. Deception is the basis for most demonic attacks against the believer, and words are the basis of that deception. Ultimately the believer's greatest battle is the struggle to believe God's Word over everything else. As it was in the beginning with Adam and Eve so it is today with you and me.

However, demons can only succeed in influencing the believer if the Christian actually believes the lie. This is why we must avoid deception: the only lie that holds sway over you is the one you believe. A lie you don't believe has no power over you.

In the spiritual war I view deception as a place. It is a territory within which demons gain strength. Demons cannot be defeated *within* their own territory of deception, and demons cannot know victory *outside* their own territory. In the darkness of deception demons are highly effective spiritual

assassins. When veiled by darkness, demonic assaults become impossible to see and therefore resist. This is why in the place of deception, believers are brutally beaten and the violent onslaught is unrelenting. Hell has no mercy.

Deception is a place no believer should wander into, for in that dark place is certain defeat. The enemy spends most of his energy on deception. His highest priority is luring all, redeemed and unredeemed alike, into whatever depth of deception possible. Once lured to the place of deception, nobody, no matter how spiritual they may be, is capable of being victorious. Though that may seem to be an extreme assertion, it is nonetheless true. No one living in deception has ever won a victory over the area where they are deceived.

However, a hope remains for those who have ventured into deception—truth. Truth evacuates the believer from the land of deception and places him on its sure foundation. Once standing upon truth, the believer gains a battle-ready footing. So in order to have victory, the believer must first remove himself from deception.

Deception is the darkness that veils the attack of your enemy.

Deception is the paralyzing venom that reduces you to motionless prey.

Deception is the only hope the enemy has of ultimately defeating you.

This is why I often call demons "shifting shadows." A shadow is created when something blocks a light source. Everything the enemy has done, is doing, or will ever do is completely founded upon lies. He uses those lies to block the light of Truth. His kingdom is built upon shifting shadows.

For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

—JOHN 8:44, NLT

Again I stress this: the only lie that holds any power over you is the one you believe. Conversely, if you know the truth, darkness cannot bind you.

And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

—JOHN 8:32, NLT

In the kingdom of hell every structure, every weapon, every effort is a lie. The bricks that form

hell's mightiest structures are made of lies. The arrows of hell, no matter how sharp they might appear, are made of lies. And when by devotion to the Word of God you come to know the truth, you shine God's virtuous light into the darkness of deception. And in that magnificent light all of the shadows disintegrate into nothingness. Truth obliterates deception. God's Word dismantles hell's lies in an *instant*.

The moment you know the truth, you are free, because you will see that the chains that bound your thoughts have no substance. The light of truth is our most powerful weapon, because it disintegrates the lies of the enemy. And against the believer, a lie is really all a demon has.

The truth of God is like a nuclear power to the forces of hell. It is devastating to Satan's kingdom. So the enemy has only one option: he must keep you from believing the truth. Hell's attacks are only successful when used against someone who is deceived.

But deception is more than just the successful telling of a lie. A major part of the enemy's deception is what he can get you to do and think *after* he has convinced you to believe his lies. Several of his

attacks against us are based on deception, including but definitely not limited to:

- Accusation (based on lies about yourself)
- Temptation (based on lies about the "goodness" of sin)
- Distraction (based on lies about the "goodness" of worldly pleasures)
- Intimidation (based on lies about the devil's abilities)
- Depression (based on lies about God, life, and you)

In the next several chapters I will highlight several of these demonic strategies and explain how you can resist them with the light of truth.

15

Demons Accuse

If anyone ever knew the things you have done, the secrets you keep, you would be despised. Out of everyone who has ever sinned, you are one of the worst. I know who you really are, and I know what you are capable of doing and thinking. What can wash away your sins? Nothing.

—SATAN

DESPERATELY SEEKING AN advantage over you, a demonic being will reach for anything within its grasp to bring you under the power of deception. The onslaught is unrelenting because each demonic being is fueled by a vengeful rage against you and God. Like a man dying in a fight, your nagging and persistent foe desperately reaches for whatever weapon may present itself for use. One such weapon, which is well within arm's reach, is your record of past mistakes. Your past sins are, even for the lowliest within the forces of hell, a very easy target.

Accusation is the form of deception the enemy uses most often. This tactic is highly effective because, as with any convincing lie, it is mingled with truth. The accusation of the enemy invokes powerful negative emotions such as guilt, shame, and embarrassment. And then those emotions only make you more susceptible to your enemy's accusing assertions.

Whether referencing a sin from decades ago or seconds ago, demonic beings whisper haunting accusations that are difficult to shake from the mind. Like a boastful and accomplished athlete calling

attention to his trophies, a demon will draw your attention to your sinful yesterday. Demons are eager to remind you of the things that bring you great shame. They enjoy the pain you experience when you think of your past failures, and they enjoy it even more if they can get you to identify as a failure.

Have you ever been casually, possibly joyfully, going about your day only to be suddenly anguished by a random recollection of a foolish or ungodly act? One minute everything is fine. Then out of nowhere a memory of a sinful or foolish decision will come to mind only to be followed by a flood of guilt and shame. Something you said, did, or thought will make you feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. Though others near you remain unaware of your internal contemplation, you are suddenly overcome with a sense of self-consciousness and regret.

We all have cringeworthy memories, and from time to time we all replay those disgraceful moments in our minds. But many don't realize that these thoughts are not entirely random. They are part of a subtle demonic assault called the accusation of the enemy.

Before we go further, I must point out that not *all* sorrow over sin is unhealthy. The Bible teaches us

that it is spiritually healthy to be filled with sorrow over sin. To a certain extent, sorrow is an appropriate response to wrongdoing. In fact, such sorrow brings about repentance.

> Godly sorrow produces repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but the sorrow of the world produces death.
>
> —2 CORINTHIANS 7:10

Humble brokenness over sin invites the grace of God.

> For You do not desire sacrifice, or I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.
>
> —PSALM 51:16–17

To maintain a biblical balance, it is vital that we embrace godly sorrow while rejecting the accusation of the enemy. And in order to accurately identify one over the other, we must come to know the difference between "godly sorrow" and "demonic accusation."

GODLY SORROW VS. DEMONIC ACCUSATION

So what's the difference between godly sorrow and demonic accusation? When the Holy Spirit confronts us regarding our sin, that confrontation is called "conviction."

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. When He comes, He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I am going to My Father, and you will see Me no more.

—JOHN 16:7–10

It is good to feel conviction (a sense of wrong) over sin, and it is good to despise our sin. However, once we have dealt with sin in our life by seeking God's forgiveness, we have to move on. We must, in every instance of sin, forgive ourselves when God has forgiven us. After all, who are we to challenge the just verdicts of God? Who would dare to call sinful that which God has deemed cleansed? God is committed to pardoning all of our wrongdoing—*all of it!* The Bible says this:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

—1 JOHN 1:9

God is faithful to forgive our sins; He does it *consistently*. He is just to forgive our sins; He does it *legally* based upon Jesus's death. So He is both faithful and just to forgive our sins. In fact, when we consistently turn away from sin, God chooses to not deal with us according to it. The beauty of Christ's sacrifice is that because of it, God treats and sees us as sinless.

He does not treat us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

—PSALM 103:10

The Holy Spirit's conviction lovingly, consistently draws us to repentance and brings freedom in our lives. By contrast, a demon's accusation (condemnation) brings guilt and emotional bondage.

Condemnation and conviction can feel similar, so it can become especially difficult to discern which is which. Naturally, we have a collective negative response in our mind and emotions to sin—guilt, shame, fear, and torment. Just as pain tells your body that there is something wrong, so your conscience tells your soul that something is wrong. However, the primary difference between conviction and condemnation is that one goes away when you've

resolved the sin issue while the other remains. When you sense guilt over sin for which you have already received God's forgiveness and from which you have already turned, you are living under what is called condemnation.

For example, if there is a problem with your car's engine, a warning light will appear on the dashboard. That check engine light is something nobody wants to see because it means you'll have to take time out of your busy schedule to take your car in for a repair that may be costly. But if you really think about it, the check engine light is a positive thing. It is alerting you to a problem. If you respond to the warning sooner than later, then in the long run you can avoid letting the problem get worse and ultimately paying a higher price for a more extensive repair. But what do most people do? They wait to respond to the light. Wanting to avoid any bad news about their cars, they will just drive around with the light on. But this is so very unpredictable. The engine can break down at any second. Who really knows what's wrong with their car without taking a look under the hood? Many drivers will procrastinate, trying to ignore the problem altogether.

Once when I had car trouble, I took my car to a

mechanic. After making all the necessary repairs, my mechanic returned my car to me in great working condition. Only when I began to drive my car again did I notice that my check engine light was still illuminated on my dashboard. A bit concerned, I called my mechanic and asked him why my check engine light was still lit. He responded very casually, "My apologies. Everything is OK. I just forgot to reset the check engine light." Despite his reassurance that all of the car's problems had been fixed, I was not comfortable driving my car until the check engine light was reset.

That is the difference between conviction and condemnation. Conviction is the light that comes on when something is wrong; condemnation is the light that remains on when all is well. After you have repented and received God's forgiveness, you need to reset your spiritual check engine light. To keep you distracted from the road ahead, the enemy will send you false signals. He wants you to be worried about a problem that isn't really there. He wants you to be anxious over a resolved issue. The enemy wants to keep you so worried about your past sins that you fail to experience God's present joy. Some believers are even afraid of enjoying their life because they are

so convinced that their sinful past will soon be along to destroy the restored present. They think that the moment they settle down to appreciate the way life is going the past will wreck it all. The devil is a liar!

Choose conviction. Reject condemnation.

Conviction tells you that you have made a mistake whereas condemnation tells you that you are a mistake. Conviction produces transformation; condemnation produces isolation. Conviction draws you closer to God in repentance; condemnation pushes you further from God in shame. Conviction inspires you to continue to walk in freedom, but condemnation discourages you from even approaching the Lord. When it comes to producing holiness in the lives of believers, conviction is more productive than condemnation. Conviction leads to the solution of a problem; condemnation leads to an illusion of a problem.

Satan is the accuser:

> Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying: "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down."
>
> —REVELATION 12:10

But Christ is our Advocate:

> My little children, I am writing these things to you, so that you do not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One.
>
> —1 JOHN 2:1

Isn't that wonderful news? But this is where the battle is, isn't it?

We know, as the Scriptures tell us, that God will forgive our sins and that He is gracious and patient (1 John 1:9, 2 Pet. 3:9). Yet despite how much Scripture we may know, it remains a struggle for many believers to actually embrace this truth in fullness. We may know what the Bible says, but we do not always embrace the Word as the truth, allowing it to change our thinking and set us free. We might find it easier to believe God will forgive someone else's sin than our own. The enemy knows we think this way.

So to keep you wrapped in guilt and shame, demons will consistently remind you of your mistakes. They want you to let the memory of past sin keep you weighted down, weary, and worried. They have no desire to see you set free from the torment of guilt and shame. But Jesus offers us peace with God and with His forgiveness comes a

clear conscience.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

—HEBREWS 9:14

The Bible could not be clearer on the matter:

Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new.

—2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

—ROMANS 8:1

When God forgives, we are clean. That is without debate. The challenging thing is learning to rest in God's forgiveness. As it is, it's not easy to believe in such extravagant forgiveness, and demons will not make it any easier. They want you to pay attention to their accusations and never enjoy the peace and joy that are yours.

This doesn't mean that demons aren't right about the fact that some of your past actions were sinful.

In fact, that nugget of truth is what gives their lies such power. You have sinned. That is true, so you don't immediately recognize that the enemy is lying to you. The enemy isn't a liar for saying you sinned; he's a liar for telling you that you haven't been pardoned for that sin.

Demons have been accusing God's people since the fall of man. Looking to Scripture, we can clearly see the demonic influence on the scribes and Pharisees:

> But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning He returned to the temple. All the people came to Him, and He sat down and taught them. The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. When they had put her in the middle, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such, but what do You say?" They said this, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him.
>
> —JOHN 8:1–6

First of all, I would like to know how the Pharisees were able to catch the woman in the act of adultery. Were they spying on her? Were they searching for someone in sin? Religious spirits meticulously search for human error. Furthermore, the Pharisees were willing to sacrifice a woman's life

just to prove a point. Like their demonic influencers, they were using facts to condemn. The spirit of religion calls for punishment, thinking that's the only way to mete out justice.

The fact is that the woman was cheating on her husband. The fact is that adultery is an ugly, destructive sin. The fact is that the Old Testament law called for the death of the woman.

But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear them. So when they continued asking Him, He stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

—JOHN 8:6–8

Jesus's wisdom is unparalleled. In a single response He both regarded the law and demonstrated mercy.

Being convicted by their conscience, those who heard it went out one by one, beginning with the eldest even to the last. Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had stood up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are your accusers? Did no one condemn you?"

She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."

—JOHN 8:9–11

We see Jesus's mercy ("Neither do I condemn you"). And we see God's grace ("Go and sin no more").

That woman was dragged from the filth of a shameful act. She was embarrassed and humiliated as she was paraded through the streets. I imagine that she was filled with dread, for the law called for her death. There she was, trembling and vulnerable.

But the stones of her accusers had been dropped to the ground, and Jesus had never picked one up. Jesus asked, "Where are your accusers?"

He asks the same of you. Where are your accusers?

The only one who has the right to accuse you . . . doesn't.

There is fact, and there is truth. A fact holds no eternal consequence. A fact fades away with time. Truth outlasts it. The fact is that you have sinned. The truth is that you're forgiven. The fact is that you have done unlovable things. The truth is God loves you.

Christ is not the accuser; He's the Advocate. So when demonic voices compel you to look at your past, oblige. But look far back enough to see the Lamb of God slain before the foundations of the

world. Stubbornly refuse to believe the accusations of the enemy. Do this consistently until you experience breakthrough. Let God's zeal arise within you. Fight hell's accusations with the truth of God's forgiveness. Enough is enough. If you've lived under the power of guilt and condemnation, then now—right this very moment—is the time to push back. Declare the truth of God's forgiveness. Be bold and filled with a righteous indignation against the enemy.

It's time to throw off the heavy weight of guilt. It's time to recognize condemnation for what it really is—a demonic attack. It's time to be free from hell's accusations.

16

Demons Tempt

I assure you of this: you are disciplined enough to overcome temptation. Controlling spiritual leaders tell you otherwise because they want to run your life. You know what's best for you. Others don't realize your spiritual strength. You don't need to flee temptation; you are strong enough to defeat it.

—SATAN

ONE EVENING I received an unexpected text message from a close friend. I opened the message, and it read, “I need to talk to you.” I don’t know how, but I knew immediately that my friend was deeply troubled. There seemed to be a weight upon his words. After receiving his text, I was moved to great concern, especially since the friend who texted me is the type of person who is almost always in a good mood. Though not at all shallow, our friendship consisted mostly of easygoing joking, typical social get-togethers, and occasional philosophical conversations. I would never label this person as “needy” nor would anyone who knows him. Asking to talk about something important or needing attention isn’t typical of this particular friend. So I took the text seriously and knew that at least a phone call was necessary.

I agreed to speak with him and texted, “When would you like to call?” Within a few seconds he sent an insistent reply: “No, I mean I need to talk to you in person, not on the phone.” Because of his straightforward reply, I went from being concerned to being worried. Despite my concerned curiosity, I resisted the urge to begin prying for more

information via text. I responded, “Sure. When this week would you like to meet?” He further pressed, “I am down the street. I’ll be at your house in a few minutes. Please, come to my car when I honk.”

That evening was not ideal for a spontaneous meeting, but I would not have even entertained the idea of sending my friend away. So I agreed to meet him. While waiting for his arrival, I began to pray, “Lord, give me wisdom. I want to help my friend through whatever he is about to present to me. Give me the right words to speak whatever the situation may be.” I imagined all sorts of potential scenarios—financial, psychological, relational, and spiritual problems. However, in my heart I knew my friend wanted to confess a sin of some sort.

True to the urgency he communicated by phone, my friend arrived at my house only minutes after he sent the text. He pulled his car right in front of my house, and from where I stood on my front porch I could see the look of dejection on his face. As I walked toward him, he unlocked his car door. I stepped in, sat down, and greeted him with a pat on his shoulder. “Hey, my friend,” I said, attempting to keep my tone upbeat.

My attempt at positivity went unmatched. The air

was tense, and I could tell that my friend was troubled. When I greeted him, he did not look at me or shake my hand as he usually did. He just sat there staring at his steering wheel. It was clear he wanted to talk, but when he started to speak, he'd choke up and grow silent again. Trying to make the conversation easier on him, I asked, "Are you OK? Tell me what's going on."

He was silent for only a few moments more. It seemed to me that he had really worked this up in his mind and was trying to collect the courage to continue. He straightened his back and let out a deep sigh. I knew he just wanted to get the words out and finally be done with the suspense about my reaction to whatever it was he was about to tell me. Then, as if rushing to confess, he calmly said, "I am struggling with lust . . . I am struggling with pornography."

Now, you have to understand why this was so difficult for my friend to confess. Not only was this friend of mine a believer, and it's difficult enough confessing something like that as a believer, but this friend of mine was a ministry leader, someone people looked up to, someone who knew better. Keeping an empathetic perspective and conscious of the shame

he felt, I encouraged him. “I am glad you’re telling me this,” I said. He nodded his head. He knew what I was trying to say. He knew I respected his honesty and willingness to address the issue. I could also tell that he was glad to have finally told someone about his private struggle. It was like a weight had been lifted from his conscience. He seemed to relax a bit and elaborated. “I feel like such a fake,” he said. “I feel so ashamed of myself.”

I will never forget the way my friend looked that night. When I saw him so burdened with guilt, an overwhelming sense of compassion rushed over me, and all I wanted was to see him free of the torment that plagued his mind. He was so dispirited, so broken. He was struggling in silence, seemingly alone to face both temptation and shame. I prayed with him and then began to minister the Word of God to him. I stressed to him the importance of both genuine repentance and of accepting the forgiveness of God. When the burden of guilt had been lifted from my friend, I proceeded to lay out for him a plan of prevention for future temptation. I asked questions that gave me an idea of the depth and nature of his struggle.

So how did he get to that place? How do so many

others get to that place?

What he told me is the same as what so many other believers in his situation (and similar situations) have told me many times. After years of speaking with people about their temptations, failures, and triumphs, I have noticed a distinct pattern.

Temptation begins as an uneventful and seemingly harmless consideration, a simple thought. Then it becomes a meditation, a repeated thought. Then it becomes an action. Then the action gets repeated. Then the repetition turns the action into a habit. Then it becomes an inescapable prison.

Temptation is not an event; it's a process. Temptation is:

- Consideration
- Meditation
- Action
- Repetition
- Fixation Addiction

Incremental compromise on a daily basis amounts to a life of disobedience to God. Conversely, seemingly small acts of daily obedience amount to a life of surrender to Christ. Demons know that reality because they've seen both scenarios unfold in the

lives of countless men and women over centuries.

THE ROOT OF ALL SIN

We are fishers of men (Matt. 4:19), but so are demons. They have expert knowledge and are skillful in baiting the human race.

> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.
>
> —1 JOHN 2:16, KJV

All sin falls into one of these categories:

- The lust of the eyes
- The lust of the flesh
- The pride of life

All sin is rooted in one of those three areas of temptation. This is why I rarely preach about specific sins. The sin begins in the heart, and the heart of the matter will always come down to one of those three issues. These three areas of temptations actually appear in the Bible right at the beginning in the Book of Genesis. They can be seen in the account of the

glorious days of Eden. Satan, a convincing deceiver, successfully used those three kinds of temptation against Adam and Eve. And their response to that temptation set in motion the great struggle of mankind. Adam and Eve's sinful error has become a template, a pattern the enemy now uses on humanity.

> The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.
>
> —GENESIS 3:6, NLT

There it is: She saw ("the tree was beautiful"). She hungered ("its fruit looked delicious"). She wanted knowledge ("she wanted the wisdom it would give her"). It was the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.

The lust of the eye tempts us with things that can be seen. This includes lust, covetousness, envy, greed, materialism, and so on.

The lust of the flesh tempts us with fleshly cravings. This includes but is not limited to drunkenness (and drugs), gluttony, fornication, laziness, and so on.

The first two areas of temptation lead to

transgression or "sinful actions." (Note that thoughts are the actions of the mind.) A transgression is something we do that violates God's holiness.

But the third area of temptation, the pride of life, leads to iniquity. Iniquity is the sin of the heart, an "internal sin." While transgression is the "doing" of something that violates God's holiness, iniquity is "being" something that violates God's holiness. So it is the pride of life that causes us to "be" sinfully angry, jealous, stubborn, unbelieving, fearful, and so on.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:5, KJV). Jesus was wounded and bled externally for our transgressions, our external sins. And He was bruised and bled internally for our iniquity, our internal sins. Because Jesus paid the penalty for our sins on the cross, we can be free. So how can we overcome these areas of temptation?

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

—HEBREWS 4:15, KJV

Christ was tempted in all three ways. He was not

tempted by every specific expression of sin that exists. But He was tempted with every fundamental draw of sin:

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

—MATTHEW 4:1–11, NIV

Here again we see the same three areas of temptation: the lust of the flesh ("Make these stones bread"); the lust of the eyes ("I will give you all you see"); and the pride of life ("Throw yourself down"

and prove You're really the Son of God). Christ resisted the enemy at all points. This is why the Scriptures say:

> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was in every sense tempted like we are, yet without sin.
>
> —HEBREWS 4:15

Knowing these three areas of temptation can help empower you to overcome the enemy's deceptive devices. Don't concern yourself with trimming the branches of sin. Instead, allow God to destroy sin at its foundation by uprooting it.

SUBMIT YOURSELF TO GOD

> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.
>
> —JAMES 4:7–8, KJV

We focus far too much on ourselves when we are tempted. Because self is the problem, relying on your own strength to secure victory over sin guarantees

defeat. When we are tempted, we try to reason and rationalize. We try to enact disciplines, and we attempt to will ourselves all the way to holiness. But such battling only makes you linger in the place of temptation. Remember this: the longer you battle a tempting thought, the more likely you are to take an action that will fulfill it. There is a better way to battle sin than to bargain with oneself. The bargaining over whether or not to sin occurs in split seconds, and demonic beings will make full use of those split seconds.

Demonic beings will debate with you, presenting the supposed benefits of sin—and that hides their tactic. You see, when you're weighing the pros and cons of sin, you are actually imagining the pleasure of the sin. Sure, seconds after considering the pleasure of sin, you counter such thoughts by considering the benefits of holiness. But the internal battle continues to nag at you. It is this back-and-forth contemplation that leads to a sinful fall. You may be genuine in your intentions to convince yourself into choosing holiness, but eventually your resilience will wear down. The sin itself will gradually dominate your thoughts as will the pleasures of that sin. And then you give in.

This is why demonic beings love a good debate in the moment you're being tempted. They are like salesmen, answering your objections with convincing counterpoints. They know what you want and will pressure you to indulge.

How then can the believer successfully battle temptation? Jesus prayed, "Lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6:13). He did not pray, "Give me strength when I put myself in a tempting situation." Sure, there are times when temptation surprises you, but the Bible has one policy on temptation: flee from it! About this Scripture is quite clear:

> The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.
>
> —1 CORINTHIANS 10:13, NLT

So flee youthful desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

—2 TIMOTHY 2:22

When you regularly flee from temptation, resisting sin becomes a reflex, a seemingly involuntary action. Over time, the reflex to flee from temptation (rather

than the habit to bargain over sin or holiness) becomes natural and well developed.

Resistance, not confrontation, is the key to overcoming sin. We are supposed to flee from temptation, not linger to fight temptation. Willpower diminishes over time, and the strength of discipline is fleeting. God wants to give you a way out, not a battle. When it comes to temptation, the Holy Spirit prioritizes extraction—getting you out of the battle. We develop our resistance—our manner of fleeing—by drawing near to God. Therefore, drawing near to God, not exercising willpower, is the key to freedom.

Scripture shows us how to resist each of the three root forms of temptation:

1. The lust of the flesh

Jesus overcame the lust of the flesh with the Word of God. He was not hungry for what the enemy offered because He was already full of the Word. Eat the Word of God and never leave room for worldly dessert. Be filled with the Word.

I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

—PSALM 119:11, NLT

The Word of God is the key to overcoming the flesh. The Bible is the food of the Spirit. If you satisfy your appetite with the Word of God, you will lessen your hunger for anything ungodly.

2. The lust of the eye

Jesus overcame the lust of the eye with worship. Worship takes place when your eyes are focused on Jesus and your heart is full of adoration for Him. Worship comes naturally when you look to Christ.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

—JOHN 4:24, KJV

Only by the Spirit can you worship, because only by the Spirit can you catch a glimpse of Jesus. Revelation inspires adoration. And as we behold Him, through the gaze of worship, we become like Him.

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

—2 CORINTHIANS 3:18, KJV

For every moment that you spend in the presence

of God, you are being changed into the image of Christ, which means you are becoming more like Jesus. Draw close to Jesus. Let the eyes of your heart become fixed upon His face, and He will be faithful to complete His masterpiece in you. Too often do we focus on the situation or the area of weakness. Too often do we worry. When under temptation, worship, for if your eyes are fixed on Jesus, how can they see with a desire for anything or anyone else?

3. The pride of life

Jesus overcame the pride of life with humility. Jesus submitted to the will of God.

God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

—JAMES 4:6, KJV

Humble yourself before God, and He will not have to do it for you. God favors the humble. And the humble, realizing their vulnerabilities, do not believe Satan's deception about their ability to withstand temptation. Often the flesh, knowing what it truly desires, will have you convinced of your ability to resist sin. King David understood such tendencies,

which is why he wrote:.

> Keep me from lying to myself; give me the privilege of knowing your instructions. I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations.
>
> —PSALM 119:29–30, NLT

People lie to themselves about their own intentions. That's how utterly desperate the flesh is for sin. The sinful nature is so very deceptive. We can convince ourselves that we do not want what we do, in fact, want. While part of us is actually interested in doing what is right, there is another part that causes us to lie to ourselves. The enemy concurs with our deception. Like the alcoholic who walks into a bar telling himself he will have only one drink, we enter the places of temptation convinced we have the strength to resist it. The alcoholic knows what he is truly doing, and so do we.

Humble yourself and realize that you are vulnerable. Lean on God, and He will strengthen you. Don't let sinful secrets derail your purpose. Demons ruthlessly leverage your secret sins to blackmail you out of holy boldness. They prowl about, testing the integrity of the boundaries you have set and look to find a point of weakness, even if just one. Then after

diligently studying your life and observing your daily routines, they use their intel to accomplish what they will.

Give a demonic being just a small habit, a seemingly insignificant evil, and it will make full use of it. Very patient and incredibly eager to exploit what it can, a demonic being will not hesitate, even for a moment, to destroy what God is doing in your life. Temptation is like a flame. If you leave a small fire to burn, it will become a consuming blaze. Allow a compromise in your spiritual defenses, a seemingly tiny hole, and legions of demons will march right through as if it were a vast opening. I urge you to secure the breach.

Secure the breach by fleeing from temptations (the more often you choose to do this, the more of a reflex it becomes). Secure the breach by avoiding tempting situations, consistently studying the Word of God, worshipping Jesus wholeheartedly, and having the kind of humility that allows you to recognize your vulnerability and draw close to the Father.

To put it simply:

Flee from sin.

Avoid tempting situations.
Study the Word.
Worship with your whole heart.
Walk in humility.

That is how you can overcome one of the most common vices: temptation.

17

Demons Distract

Don't be too spiritual or weird trying to remain "alert" to demonic beings. They really aren't paying much attention to your everyday life. It doesn't really matter how you spend your time or energy. Be at ease. In the day-to-day, demons aren't much of a threat.

—SATAN

DURING WORLD WAR II, in the spring of 1945, the Germans were already virtually defeated and had retreated to their last, desperate stronghold. Pushed back just across the Rhine River (which, incidentally, helped to protect the German line of defense), the Germans prepared to resist the advancement of the Western Allies (which included the United States and Britain). Scouting for potential threats and attempting to predict enemy movement, the Germans took to the air to survey the line of conflict. It was during this time that the US Army made use of a unique tactical unit.

An unorthodox yet effective group, the special unit came to be called the "Ghost Army." They had already completed several successful missions during the war. But this one would prove to be their most important.[1]

During reconnaissance operations from their airspace on the other side of the river, the Germans gathered intelligence on the Ghost Army, which, despite what its name implies, was quite visible. The Germans saw tanks, airplanes, trucks, jeeps, and camps with upward of thirty thousand battle-ready soldiers. But the Ghost Army wasn't just seen. Its

threatening ambience could be heard from several miles away. Not only could the army be heard preparing for battle, but they also could be heard constructing a bridge to help them across the Rhine. Naturally, wanting to resist the advancement of the United States, the Germans responded by positioning more of their forces just across from the threat, in preparation for what they assumed was an inevitable attack.

Yet, despite the fact that it was a very special unit, the Ghost Army did not victoriously pass the German defenses. In fact, they did not even bother to try. Instead, while the Germans prepared to resist the Ghost Army at one point of the river, other US units attacked from elsewhere. And because the Germans weren't prepared for the attack to come from elsewhere, there were relatively few casualties for the United States. The Ghost Army had done its job of distracting the Germans.

So who was this Ghost Army? Technically the Ghost Army posed no real threat to the Germans. Its soldiers weren't typical recruits. They were chosen because before the war they had been art students, theatre professionals, advertising experts, and the like. Many had come from show business. They

were recruited because of their ingenuity, artistic inclinations, and creative abilities. The Ghost Army never planned to be in actual combat and, in fact, were virtually incapable of being in combat.

Their mission was to deceive. The sound of the Ghost Army's movement actually came from recordings played through large and powerful loudspeakers. The sounds of battle preparation, bridge construction, and troop voices were nothing more than realistic Hollywood-quality sound effects. The army that appeared to number in the tens of thousands consisted of only about a thousand people. They moved back and forth in jeeps to make it seem as though they had larger numbers. Like horses on a merry-go-round, the same soldiers cycled about the camp, presenting a powerful illusion of larger numbers.

Oh, and the tanks and airplanes—those were inflatable props, essentially balloons. Actually *wanting* to be seen, the Ghost Army even did a "poor job" of camouflaging itself from the enemy. Their fake airport was so realistic that they had to turn a US pilot away when he mistook their field for an actual landing strip.

The Ghost Army even filled the surrounding air

with fake radio chatter and Morse code signals that they meticulously tailored to make as realistic as possible. When the Germans intercepted the fictional communications, they became privy to the "fact" that two American divisions were posted just across the way and ready to attack. Having fallen for the deception, the Germans prepared to resist the Ghost Army's attack. Only the Ghost Army never attacked. Meanwhile, ten miles north the actual US units crossed the river and handily defeated the Germans because they were unprepared for the real battle.

With the victory secure, the Ghost Army packed up their props and speakers and moved to safer territory. I do not know what the Germans found more surprising—the unexpected attack by US troops or learning that they had positioned themselves to oppose an army that wasn't real.

Had the Ghost Army ever actually faced combat, it probably would have been obliterated. Their specialty was distraction. They used tricks and gimmicks to make themselves seem like a strong force, but it was only show.

MASTERS OF ILLUSION

Demonic beings know the art of distraction too. Aiming to draw your attention away from their primary attacks, they challenge you with unnecessary battles and sidetrack you with distractions.

As far as unnecessary battles go, demons often cause tension between unsuspecting believers by instigating misunderstandings that lead to offense. I can think of nothing more unnecessary than Christians being at odds with one another, yet I can hardly think of a problem more prevalent in the body of Christ. This is no accident. Demonic beings want to keep us busy fighting one another. Why should they waste time discouraging us if we can discourage one another? Why should they bother spreading evil reports if they can get us to gossip and slander?

Paul the Apostle recognized the senselessness of these kinds of conflicts among believers. He made it clear to the church at Ephesus that our main conflict is not with flesh and blood.

> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
>
> —EPHESIANS 6:12, KJV

Certainly there will be some conflict among the

faithful. But it is spiritually negligent to be unmindful of the enemy's role in fostering dissension within relationships. Few demonic assaults can derail kingdom advancement such as discord and bitterness.

> Pursue peace with all men, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord, watching diligently so that no one falls short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness spring up to cause trouble, and many become defiled by it.
>
> —HEBREWS 12:14–15

The fact that bitterness is described as a "root" clues us in to its nature. It begins as a seed, something quite small. If watered by continued misunderstanding and offense, that seed will eventually become a significant obstruction, one that chokes the very life from you. How many times have you believed something negative about your brother or sister in Christ without reasonable cause, perhaps because you were emotionally vulnerable? Whether such negativity should stem from jealousy or offense, I think most of us would be surprised, horrified even, to find that some of our negative thoughts started as a demonic whisper in our ears.

How many churches split over silly conflicts? How

much division is caused by trivial issues? How many churches have come to ruin because of petty disputes and misunderstandings? The enemy is too cunning to use obvious means of destruction. To keep us from fighting for the souls of humanity, to keep us from performing the will of God, the enemy will influence us to fight one another, which fulfills the will of Satan. While you might think your dislike of someone came directly from offense, it actually could have come from the counsel of a demon that sits near your shoulder. It's chilling to imagine this, but it happens all the time.

When we allow offense, jealousy, bitterness, and competitive ambition to rule the way we see another brother or sister in Christ, we are submissively heeding the suggestions of demonic lies. The enemy would much rather you think lifting your hands in worship or memorizing scripture makes you spiritual than think true spirituality is having Christlike humility, mercy, grace, love, and forgiveness.

When many Christians imagine a demonic attack, they seem to think of it only as a dramatic display of dark forces clashing in an unseen realm. Don't get me wrong. I've seen my share of dramatic demonic displays, but oftentimes spiritual warfare looks more

like gossip than it does magic. Demonic influence can be just as powerful in unforgiveness as it is in drug abuse. The enemy doesn't mind you praying in tongues so long as he can get you to slander your brother with the same mouth. The devil's ghost army are masters at distracting us from the real foe.

In addition to distracting us with relational division, demonic beings will also use mundane things to get us to lose our focus. We know the dangers of witchcraft or living in blatant sin. But the average Christian does not lose his spiritual edge to the occult; he loses it to seemingly innocuous entertainment. For the most part, people do not leave the church to pursue a life of crime; they leave it to pursue a life of comfort.

We expect nightmarish attacks from the enemy, and sometimes that is how the demonic assault comes. But while we are looking for demons in the extreme, they more often actually hide in the mundane. It can be as simple as this: When the Holy Spirit says, "Pray," a demon whispers, "Relax." When God says, "Now," the enemy says, "Not yet." If the enemy cannot stop you with temptation, he will slow you with distraction.

Even King David fell prey to such distraction. In 1

Chronicles Satan incited King David to tally the people of Israel:

Now Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel. Then David said to Joab and the leaders of the people, "Go count Israel from Beersheba to Dan and bring me a report, that I may know their number."

But Joab said, "May the Lord increase the number of His people one hundred times more. My lord the king, are not all of them my lord's servants? Why then should my lord require this? Why should it bring guilt on Israel?"

Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab, so Joab departed and went throughout all Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

—1 CHRONICLES 21:1–4

King David has quite a few sinful blunders under his belt, but most would not regard a national census as evil. Still, God was not pleased with King David's census. Basically the census was a time-wasting distraction.

While upon the earth, man's time is a limited and precious resource that should be used to glorify God. There is no harm in recreation and relaxation to help us maintain our effectiveness. But we must avoid things that unnecessarily absorb our time. If you are not mindful of hell's distractions, demonic beings will

drain you of energy, enthusiasm, time, and resources. Sometimes the key to accomplishing more is doing less. Sometimes to find strength, you simply have to keep yourself from being stretched too thin. And sometimes to hone in on your God-given destiny, you have to evaluate what consumes you.

How easily can you spot distractions? Do you unknowingly fight against the nonthreatening? Has conflict with a brother or sister in Christ emptied you of spiritual zeal? Has the enemy pulled you from the important battles through diversion? If he hasn't done so, he will try. Stay alert and watch for such distractions.

DANGER: DISTRACTIONS AHEAD

You cannot identify your distractions unless you first identify your goals. A distraction is anything that keeps us from fulfilling a given commitment or achieving a given purpose. Often the enemy will tailor the distraction to the desired goal. Not all distractions are demonic, but demons definitely work to be distracting. I know this to be true from experience.

From the time I was eleven years old, I knew I

was called by God to be an evangelist. So I started preaching the gospel when I was just thirteen. While being in ministry has many struggles, I wouldn't want to do anything else. I find nothing more fulfilling than seeing people come to Jesus.

From age thirteen to age seventeen I didn't waver in my belief that I was called to preach. I was absolutely convinced of it, and nobody could convince me otherwise. However, when I turned eighteen, I watched as many of my friends began to prepare for college and lifelong careers. Part of me felt as if I was missing out on an exciting phase of life. I had often missed out on things. Because of my early stand for holiness, I didn't participate in a lot of the things other teenagers were doing. Some of my Christian friends even told me that my stands were a bit extreme. But I had so often prayed, "Lord, take everything else. I just want You. I'll pay the price for the anointing on my life!"

My standards for what I wouldn't watch or listen to would often isolate me from others. But I would use that time to seek the Lord.

However, when my friends began to plan for the rest of their lives, I was told something that burrowed itself into the back of my mind. It was a

harmless statement, but it became like a seed, and it was planted in my mind. Someone told me, "You know, you have really good grades, and you're very smart. You can probably do almost anything you want to do." I took the compliment with gratitude, but that compliment echoed in my mind for days.

I began to feel cheated, taken advantage of. I wondered why God would make me miss out on a successful career. I was frustrated. And as I watched my friends begin on their career paths, I was anguished with jealousy. I placed an immense amount of pressure on myself to find a way to make full-time ministry and full-time college work together.

Being in ministry required me to travel—a lot. But college would require that I be local for most of the time. Then there was the money issue. I wasn't making much as an evangelist. If I wanted to go to college, I would have to make a job, a college life, and a full-time ministry all work together. I'm not one who hides behind excuses, so I set out to make it work.

I researched financial aid, college schedules, and anything that could bring me closer to my goal of going to college and having a typical college experience while continuing in ministry. My parents

didn't pressure me to do this. My siblings didn't pressure me. I pressured myself, because I was comparing my life to the lives of others around me. I wanted to be counted among the academics. I wanted to be respected as a professional. But God had other plans for me.

The pressure exhausted me. Eventually I grew bitter and upset. It didn't seem as though any of it would work. The timing just wasn't right. I went for a walk and sat on a river bank for about an hour. I just sat there staring at the water. And there, in my moment of despair, God spoke to me and said: "I've called you to be an evangelist."

His simple words liberated me. I felt a huge burden lift from my shoulders, and I sensed an overwhelming joy. I felt bursts of energy, like spiritual rushes of adrenaline, well up within my being.

Why was I so frustrated in trying to get something to work that God never intended for me to do? Why was I so angry about not being able to walk down a path that my feet were not formed to follow? I had become distracted.

The enemy doesn't distract us with sin; he tempts us with sin. The enemy distracts us with good

things, petty things, and earthly things.

For me, college was a distraction because ministry was my assignment. I'm not saying that you can't do both ministry and college. I'm simply saying that for me, college was out of the will of God.

Some distractions are easy to spot if you just read the Scripture. The discord you might have with a brother becomes obviously wrong as you read the Word. But then there are distractions that seem good or, at the very least, not sinful.

> There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.
>
> —PROVERBS 14:12

For me, all the enemy had to do was use a compliment to his advantage. The person who told me, "You know, you have really good grades . . ." wasn't being evil. But the enemy used those words to distract me. Since he couldn't tempt me out of the ministry, he tried to bless me out of the ministry.

So this is the challenging part. Some demonic distractions are more difficult to spot than others. How do we know when we are being distracted? And more importantly, how do we overcome the attack of distraction?

No consistency

If there is no consistency in your prayer life, church attendance, devotion to God's Word, or lifestyle of holiness, then you are likely living in distraction. Those who are undistracted prioritize properly. If you are unfaithful or sporadic with the most important cultivators of your spirituality, then it's time to readjust your life.

No resistance

If the enemy is not bothering to attack you, it's because you aren't a threat. While peace should always reign in your heart, you should need to resist the devil as Scripture instructs because he should be seeking to oppose you. Demonic resistance intensifies more in some seasons than others, but if you are truly walking in God's will for your life, the enemy will not like it and an attack is likely.

No cross

Jesus challenged His disciples to carry a cross. Christianity is extreme. If it's casual, it's not Christianity. If your life revolves around your convenience, you're distracted. True followers of

Jesus are willing to be inconvenienced and even persecuted for the sake of His name.

No progress

Remember that you can't identify your distractions until you identify your goals. For the believer, the goals should include building the kingdom of God, winning the lost to Christ, living holy, and the like. We must not use the wrong measure for our progress. For example, many pastors measure their success by the number of people who attend their churches. But the measure of their success should be whether they're obeying God. If you're not making progress in areas that truly count, you're likely distracted.

No passion

While everyone goes through seasons of apathy, on some level you need to have a passion for what you do. I believe purpose and passion are linked. If you're living out your God-given purpose, you'll walk in a Spirit-empowered passion. Apathy is a sign of distraction. We all need rest and recreation, but keep them in their rightful place.

If all else fails, you can also identify demonic

distraction by asking yourself these three questions:

- What are God's goals for me?
- What is necessary for me to do in order to accomplish God's goals for me?
- Am I doing what is necessary to accomplish God's goals for me?

Once distractions are identified, you must exercise your free will to resist them. You must become disciplined and intentional about setting aside the time and reserving the focus necessary to do all that God requires of you. Be aware that demonic beings will often throw out suggestions for you to add to your schedule and to-do list. Demons will keep you busy, but God wants you to be productive. Demons want to fill your time, but God wants you to maximize your time. Demons distract.

18

Demons Intimidate

You call yourself a Christ-follower, but know this: I am stronger than you realize and more capable than you're willing to admit. Step outside the line, attempt to put your faith in action, and I will be there to prevent you. I will destroy the defector who rebels against my kingdom. Let it be known that any divine loyalist will suffer severe repercussions.

—SATAN

A FEW YEARS AGO I flew out for a ministry trip to the beautiful state of Missouri. It is a flat, lush state, especially in the spring and summer, but I was traveling there in the winter when the green plains had been replaced with elegant layers of white snow. Born and raised in Southern California, I don't do especially well in low temperatures. So while in Missouri I spent most of my week indoors.

As dull as that may seem, spending most of my time inside proved to be beneficial. For me, more time inside, especially on ministry trips, equals more time in prayer and studying God's Word. That is because, in part, I've found that the most powerful ministry events are preceded by special, long periods of devoted, secluded prayer.

Having fulfilled my usual ministry preparations, I was ready to speak to God's people. Feeling energized and excited about what God was to do, I headed toward the lively church at which I was to minister. I had ministered at this church before, and, remembering what God had done there on my previous trips, I expected nothing less than a genuine outpouring of God's Holy Spirit.

As the car I was riding in pulled into the parking

lot, I laid eyes upon the traditional-looking church building. It was a brick building topped with a white steeple. Set against an overcast, cloudy sky, the church stood out as an inviting shelter from the soon-coming snow.

I exited the car and began to walk toward the building, shivering with every step. As soon as I stepped foot in the church lobby, I was immediately overcome with a very uneasy and apprehensive feeling. I had been struck by a sudden bout of intimidation. A certain darkness hovered about the air, and I started to feel subdued in the spirit.

Casually greeting the kind church people, I began to look for a private room to which I could swiftly retreat. The longer I loitered in the lobby, the more pressure I felt in the spirit. Despite having prayed all day, I started to sense an urgency to seek the Lord. I spotted a little office across the way. I hurried toward that room, all the while engaging in short conversations with the various people who stopped me for a friendly chat. I certainly didn't want to be rude, but I knew I had to get to the safety of prayer. I made it to the room before the service could begin, and I checked the time. I had mere minutes to resolve the ominous inner conflict I was sensing.

Then I needed to get into the church service.

Once I made it inside the little office, I shut the door, fell to my knees, and began to pray. “Lord, what is this I am feeling?” I asked. “Did I do something to grieve You?” To my dread, I heard no reply from the Lord. “This isn’t good,” I thought to myself, “How am I supposed to minister to the church if I am feeling this way? How am I supposed to minister if I am having difficulty hearing the Lord speak to me?” Determined to break the spiritual barriers that prevented my flowing with the Spirit, I continued to pray for another fifteen minutes or so. Unfortunately I was still unable to shake the heaviness that weighed upon my emotions. Finding no breakthrough, I heard the worship team beginning to play. Then I felt rushed!

Some pastors get offended if I’m not in their worship service. Typically I would try to oblige them, but this time was different. I knew something odd was happening in the spirit, and I needed to be silent and still to discover what exactly was taking place. I remained in the little office for the first few worship songs or so. I thought, “If I do not break whatever this is, I am not going to be able to minister properly tonight.” After some persistent prayer, I

knew it was time for me to go into the service. I reluctantly walked into the sanctuary where I was still able to feel the oppressive spiritual burden.

I did my best to worship along with the church. I lifted my hands, closed my eyes, and sang to the Lord. Yet even in that worship service, the negative force deeply troubled me.

To finish the worship set, the music team played a soft and slow song. Unfortunately the manifested presence of God did not fill the room. It was during that song that I was suddenly jolted by an intensification of the evil presence. Cold chills moved up and down my body as an ugly darkness troubled me in almost every sense. As if someone were tapping me on the shoulder, I felt my attention being pulled from behind. Almost instinctively, I turned my head to look behind me.

As soon as I turned my head toward the back of the church, I made instant eye contact with a man dressed in all black. Wearing strange piercings on his face and clutching a satanic bible in his hands, the man was standing against the back wall just staring at me. His very presence mocked the Holy Spirit, and his disruptive intentions were clear to me. A mischievous grin stretched across his face as he

nodded his head as if to say, “Yes, it’s me.”

I turned away from him, closed my eyes, and began to again worship the Lord. In that moment the troubling emotions that I was sensing made perfect sense. Though I could still feel the demonic presence in the room, I felt an inner peace. I was relieved to realize that the troubling sense was the result of a demonic attack as opposed to the Lord being grieved. Knowing that the source of the issue was demonic, the appropriate response became clear to me. I was determined to defeat the occult powers of hell, and I knew the enemy did not stand a chance.

After the worship service came to a close, the church people greeted one another with friendly exchanges. While everyone moved about the room socializing, the strange man made his way toward the front row and sat down. He was boldly issuing a challenge to me and the Holy Spirit. I felt like the prophet Elijah, the servant of the Lord who publicly challenged the false prophets of Baal. As I recall these events, I cannot help but think of this powerful verse of Scripture:

> You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
>
> —1 JOHN 4:4

After the greeting, knowing that I was carrying the presence of the Holy Spirit upon my life, I walked confidently onto the platform. As soon as I got the microphone, I asked everyone to stand to their feet. Calmly I said, "People, there is spiritual warfare going on in this service tonight. We need to pray." Everyone in the room rose to their feet and began to pray in the spirit—everyone, that is, except the strange man dressed in black. Wearing a smug look on his face, the man remained seated and drew the attention of those around him. Still looking directly at me, he cradled his satanic bible as if to display it.

A holy boldness, a righteous indignation surged within me. Making sure the man knew his place, I spoke firmly and directly to him. I don't think he expected me to do that, but I stared right at him and declared, "Sir, I see you sitting there, and you look confident. But you need to know that you have no power here, and there is nothing you can do to stop God from moving tonight." As soon as I told him that, the heaviness lifted off the room, and the presence of the Holy Spirit manifested. I'm telling you it was an instant shift! It was as if a demonic mist just evaporated. I could tell by the look on the man's face that he felt his demonic power rush out

of the room. His self-assured demeanor was broken. Again I don't think he expected me to confront him publicly like that.

Needless to say, God moved mightily in that service. I feel safe in assuming that the man had imagined a completely different scenario than the one that actually occurred. So why did that strange man attend the church service? What exactly was he hoping to accomplish? I can only guess at what the man was trying to do, but because of what I had sensed in my spirit I know with certainty what his demonic influencers sought to do. The demonic assignment was simple: intimidate and cause fear.

FEAR NOT

When most Christians picture a demonic assault of fear, they visualize frightening apparitions or shadows in the dark corners of a room. Granted, that does sometimes happen. I can recall my share of creepy demonic encounters. Yes, sometimes demons can manifest themselves into hair-raising visuals, resembling what might be seen in the latest scary movie.

In fact, on a side note, I am of the belief that much of what you see in horror films is inspired by real-life demonic encounters. The movie industry is an incubator for the demonic, and many of the filmmakers live blatantly ungodly lives. So when people go to see their films, it's quite possible that the audience is seeing a portrayal of a real demonic being (possibly ones actually seen by the movie makers). When the people leave the theatre, many of them take a spirit of fear home with them. What's also disturbing are the reports of people believing themselves to be demon-possessed after watching movies on that subject. Just as God will use a book, a song, or a movie to speak to us, so will demons.

But back to my point. I concede to the fact that demons can, indeed, be horrifically terrifying in a monster-under-the-bed sort of way. However, I must stress that most of the time, demons are less theatrical and more pragmatic than you might believe. A demon would rather you run from the call of God than from a spirit haunting your house.

Demons intimidate, and intimidation brings discouragement.

Discouragement has more to do with fear than with sorrow. Of course, discouragement can seem

like depression because it destroys energy, passion, and movement. But ultimately discouragement is the dismissing of courage. It is to *dis*courage.

Demons may not frighten you via a terror in the night, but the fear they do cause can have effects that are far more severe. Discouragement is about getting you to live by fear instead of faith. Standing between you and what God wants to do in your life is the obstacle of fear. That is why fear should have no place in your life. Reiterating that truth, the Bible says:

> For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and self-control.
>
> —2 TIMOTHY 1:7

Because of God's love for us, we are left without a reason to fear.

> There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. Whoever fears is not perfect in love.
>
> —1 JOHN 4:18

Why does fear then still work on the believer? What is it about fear that makes it so easy, so natural, to embrace?

It's because somewhere deep down walking according to our fear gives us a false sense of control. When we worry, we are under the impression that our obsessing over an issue will prevent a negative outcome. But when it is seriously examined, worry turns out to merely be an illusion of power, a useless attempt at control. I repeat: worry is a useless exercise. Jesus Himself addressed this:

> Therefore, I say to you, take no thought about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they do not sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? Who among you by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature?
>
> —MATTHEW 6:25–27

To help bring balance to this thought, I must point out the fact that the word *fear* doesn't always mean the same thing in Scripture. For example, we are told to fear God:

> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
>
> —PROVERBS 9:10

The word *fear* in this verse is referring to reverence and submissiveness toward God. It's not speaking of the same fear mentioned in 1 John 4:18. We know this because God is love, and the fear John wrote about is incompatible with love. So there *has* to be a difference in the fear described in Proverbs and the fear described in 1 John. Having reverencing fear toward God is healthy.

On a more practical note, it's also easy to confuse fear with caution. Caution is vigilance, wisdom, and care, not fright or intimidation. Caution is alertness and thoughtfulness. It's perfectly healthy to exercise caution.

Furthermore, some fear is rational and necessary for survival. If you are ever attacked or placed near harm, fear tells you to dodge or resist the threat. It's OK for you to have some fears so long as those fears do not have you.

Unhealthy fear is not the same as reverencing fear, caution, or practical fear.

But be aware: demons will take the natural emotion of fear and leverage it to their advantage. The world in which we live gives us an abundance of excuses to be afraid. People can easily become entangled in fears of war, disease, economic collapse, death, and

tragedy.

Do things like that happen? Yes, of course they do. It doesn't take a divine revelation to know that sometimes, even though we are followers of Christ, bad things will happen to us. Even tragic things will happen to us. Still, we mustn't live in a constant state of worry, and we mustn't avoid every single risk that life presents. To put it simply, fear becomes spiritually unhealthy when it discourages us from thinking and acting in faith.

The Bible tells us a story about a rich, powerful young man who asked Jesus what it would take to inherit eternal life. Upon hearing the young man's question, Jesus listed several of God's commands and asked the young man about his commitment to those instructions. In response the young man confidently cited his consistent and long-term obedience to the law. While the young man was obedient in many areas, Jesus further challenged him on one issue in particular.

Then Jesus, looking upon him, loved him and said to him, "You lack one thing: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, take up the cross and follow Me." He was saddened by that word, and he went away grieving. For he had many possessions.

—MARK 10:21–22

There was just one thing he lacked. Yet the young man was so afraid of all he would lose, he missed out on everything he could have gained.

We all have *one thing*. That *one thing* may be different in every season of life, but it's the thing we fear so much that it keeps us from fully following Christ. For the young ruler, the one thing was the abandonment of his earthly riches. What is it for you? What do the demonic beings whisper to you? What step of faith are they hoping you never take? What lies are they telling you in an attempt to intimidate you from doing what you know you need to do?

Usually the enemy attacks us most harshly in the areas where we have the most potential for good. Fearing hurt, we cower from forgiving others. Fearing inconvenience, we run from God's call. Fearing mockery, we linger in silence. Fearing embarrassment, we resist the confession of secret sin. Fearing the cost of following Christ, we firmly grasp our earthly treasures. Fear keeps people bound in mediocrity.

That which you fear doing the most just might be

what brings about the greatest breakthrough in your life. Are you afraid of the call of God? Are you afraid of connecting with people? Are you afraid to give of your finances to advance the gospel? Are you afraid of taking a step of faith? Are you afraid to start that business? Are you afraid to obey the voice of God?

Fear just might be the leading cause of unfulfilled destiny.

It's time to open your eyes and see. Recognize the deception-based fear for what it is—the construct of a demonic voice. It's time to quit listening to the suggestions of demonic powers. Conquer your fear by acting in faith. Choose to obey God despite what you fear may happen. Decide to live as the Scripture teaches no matter what it might cost you. Commit to surrendering to God even if you're anxious about not being in control. Leave your life in God's hand through uncompromised obedience. Do not be discouraged; God is with you.

When a demonic being tries to bind you in fear, break free with faith.

19

Demons Depress

Troops, remember this: as a man thinks, so is he. Get the believer to think negatively, and you'll have him suffering under the weight of depression. It all begins with his thoughts.

—SATAN

TRAVELING ALL OVER the world preaching the gospel gives me a unique perspective on the overall

condition of the church. I minister in churches of all sizes, age groups, and cultures. Every group of believers has its own strengths and weaknesses. And though there are many shallow characteristics that differentiate us, we are, in a more fundamental sense, one in the same. We share the most important strengths. Yet we also seem to share similar weaknesses.

One such weakness that I have observed is the church's perception of issues such as depression. I was shocked to discover how common an ailment depression is in the body of Christ. Depression doesn't just affect many churches; it affects many people in many churches. Sometimes when I minister at churches, I am instructed by the Lord to pray for those who may be suffering with depression. And often a very high percentage of those in the church will respond to my offer to pray against their depression.

Though I have never surveyed a church on this issue, I would estimate that as much as a third of the church will accept offers for prayer against depression. But the response isn't just high numerically; it's high in intensity. Those who come forward for prayer are profoundly moved. As I look

into the faces of the people, I can see their deep-rooted issues; their burrowed pasts surface through their tears. Depression is a hidden struggle, and it is an ugly struggle.

Several years ago I released a book that specifically addresses anxiety and depression. In one church I visited, the line to buy that book stretched outside the church building. People were buying extra copies for their family members and friends. Within less than an hour, my entire inventory of books on depression was gone. I will never forget what happened the moment the book sold out. A woman sighed in disappointment. She was one step behind the man who bought the last few copies. Then tears filled her eyes as she said, "I battle with severe depression. Are you sure you have no more copies left for me?"

I knew I was completely sold out of that book, and I didn't know what to tell her. Thankfully someone overheard the woman's plea and gifted her a copy. That woman wasn't the only one who was in a desperate place. Almost everyone who approached my book table told me something along the lines of, "I have several loved ones who battle depression, and I battle it often as well." I was stunned.

Depression has become something of a spiritual epidemic *in the church*. When I fully realized just how successful the enemy's attack of depression had been on the church, I became angry. Since then I have intentionally remained aware of the problem and have sought opportunities to help people who suffer with depression. That is partly why I have included the subject in this book.

But here again I must digress. As you have likely recognized by now, I make efforts to remain balanced on these sorts of topics. So I must insert this anchor thought: demons can cause depression, but not all depression is demonic. Some bouts of depression come as a result of the difficult but unavoidable circumstances we face in life. And if you've been prescribed medication for depression, I am not encouraging you to discontinue using it without consulting with your doctor.

Depression is a small part of everyone's life here on earth. However, demonic beings can both hijack and invoke depression to bring about sustained, unhealthy ramifications. As with almost all other strong emotions, demons can take natural feelings of sadness or concern and leverage them for their purposes. They can intensify and prolong depression

beyond what is healthy or understandable. So whether or not the depression was caused by natural life events, it's quite possible that you can still fall prey to depression that is prolonged or manipulated by demonic beings. And in some cases demonic beings are even the root cause.

But self-assessment is the difficult part, especially with this particular demonic assault. Admitting a problem brings you one step closer to accepting the challenge of finding the solution. Many people avoid such admission simply because they dread the work that lies ahead to break free. It's not unlike the way people avoid trips to the hospital because they are terrified of a bad medical diagnosis, as self-defeating as that may seem. People do not want to be stigmatized, misunderstood, or looked at as any less spiritual because of their struggles with depression. People don't want to be labeled, and depression can be seen as an embarrassing issue.

A DISTORTED PERSPECTIVE

I know that when I struggled with depression I was afraid to talk about it publicly, imagining that people

would make comments such as, “Well, you just need to rebuke it and have faith” or, “You must not really know the Lord or be filled with His Spirit because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom!” Believe it or not, people actually told me things like that. Of course, those who view their spirituality as a competition will jump at the opportunity to shame you for not being “spiritual enough” to overcome depression. To admit to a problem, you have to be vulnerable. And being vulnerable is just that—it makes you an easy target. Some will leverage your vulnerability to make themselves feel more spiritual.

But please know this: depression is not God’s will for your life. Furthermore, depression is not a sign of spiritual weakness; it is a sign of a distorted perspective. If you struggle with depression, you’re in good company. King David, Jeremiah, Jonah, Noah, and many others in Scripture suffered from bouts of depression. I realize that depression can be physiological, the result of chemical imbalances in the brain, but for most people, depression is the result of deception. Nine times out of ten, if you are depressed, then somewhere deep within you believe a lie. And it is these lies that demons use to oppress and torment. Jesus Himself experienced heartache,

but never did He succumb to the suffocating depression demons want people to become trapped in. Depression can arise from everyday tragedy and disappointment. However, demonic depression is caused by, prolonged by, or intensified by deception and lies.

So I am not trying to shame or demean you. Neither do I want to question your spirituality. I simply want to bring to your attention the fact that demons may very well be the instigators of the lowliness you might bear.

Think about it. Depression is evil. It is a tiring and violent onslaught of negativity so powerful that it can drive a person—who is naturally inclined to self-preservation—to end his or her own life. It infects the mind, causing every thought and observation to become a twisted provocation for self-harm. Depression pulls its victim into an isolated world of sorrow, apathy, and quiet anger.

To cause it, demons need only to repeat a lie again and again. Their propaganda buries its seeds of depression so deep into the mind that eventually an otherwise joy-filled believer will transform into a cynic. Just as the Holy Spirit works with the Word of God planted in our hearts, so demons work with the

lies that take root within us.

Eroding joy, demons use lies such as these:

- God cannot possibly love you.
- You have made too many mistakes.
- You'll never regain the good you have lost.
- You're alone, insignificant, and incapable of anything great.
- God is angry with you.
- No one cares about you.
- You will never again know joy.

We go from hearing the lie to entertaining the lie to believing the lie. And then the weight of ungodly belief manifests itself as depression, sorrow, and apathy.

A common cause of depression is guilt, and we feel guilty when we do not believe God forgives us as the Bible says He does. A sense of loneliness can also depress the soul, and we sense loneliness when we fail to remember that God is an ever-present companion (Ps. 46). The bottom line is that depression comes from deception, and deception often comes from the lies spoken by demonic beings.

Even grief, an otherwise natural response to loss,

can be seized on and sustained in an unnatural way. You may have lost a loved one, but is it possible that demonic beings are whispering, "You'll never see him again" or, "You'll never see her again"? Is it possible that demonic beings are adding to your grief by taking advantage of it and bombarding you with lies?

The most challenging part of dealing with depression is the way it keeps you down. Negative thinking causes depression, and depression causes negative thinking. It becomes a virtually inescapable cycle, a catch-22. But you are not without hope, for the Holy Spirit Himself will contradict the demonic voices and raise you from despair through the Word of God, as the Scripture says:

> Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things.
>
> —PHILIPPIANS 4:8

For every lie a demon speaks, there is a truth that you can declare. When a demonic being hisses, "God has abandoned you," you can rise and boldly proclaim, "He said, 'I will never leave you nor

forsake you!’” When an evil spirit taunts, “You’re not going to make it,” you can retaliate with, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength!”

Demons are persistent with their depressing lies, which is why you must be persistent in receiving and proclaiming liberating truth. Get off the ground and stand to fight. Get angry with the enemy and become audacious. Don’t sit under the weight and degradation of depression. Instead, identify the voice of the enemy, confront it with truth, and reclaim your joy.

You may have thought depression was something you would have to live with for the rest of your life. You may have accepted depression as a normal part of your existence. But this day the demonic forces are exposed. Take away their power to cause depression by acknowledging the part they play in your battle with depression and by realizing that the words they speak are nothing more than lies. Declare that they cannot possess you, oppress you, or even depress you anymore. They’ve been caught, exposed, and stripped of their power.

The Bible tells us that He who is in us is greater than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4), but it is still important to remain vigilant. Just as in any other war,

there are casualties in spiritual warfare. Sadly demons sometimes succeed.

20

Demons Sometimes Succeed

Troops, use the believer's self-righteous, pseudo-spiritual confidence against him. He thinks himself to be more spiritually mature if he treats spiritual warfare as something he doesn't need to take seriously, a fight he will win with no thought or effort. The pride that is lurking beneath the surface will lead to his downfall.

—SATAN

AFTER I HAD been faithfully preaching the gospel for about eight years or so, I noticed a growth spurt in the ministry. Since its inception the ministry had been gradually expanding its impact. But around that eight-year mark, there was an unexpected and rapid acceleration of growth. And I really do mean *rapid* acceleration. Within just a matter of weeks the ministry went from struggling to pay the bills to preparing to air worldwide television broadcasts. It was by all accounts a miraculous leap forward. I can tell you in all sincerity that it was completely God's doing.

I had faithfully persisted in ministry for years without seeing that sort of growth. Furthermore, I wasn't doing anything different. My efforts were basically the same as they had been since the beginning. Nothing dramatic changed in my approach to ministry, style of preaching, or administrative strategy. But growth surprised me nonetheless. It was as if my years of faithfulness, though not the direct cause of the increase, were kissed by the Holy Spirit.

Although it was unexpected to me, the breakthrough was not by accident. It came in God's

perfect timing as He breathed afresh upon His ministry. The positive growth was due to that touch of divine favor. I cannot explain it otherwise.

Obviously I was thrilled to experience ministry growth. Thankful for what was happening, I wanted to faithfully steward the Lord's blessings. Attempting to make the best use of God's provision, I sought the Lord for wisdom. At His direction I began to strategically implement practical organizational improvements and overall restructuring. Of course, I also made personal and spiritual adjustments.

However, despite both my practical and spiritual efforts to remain balanced while becoming more effective in ministry, I felt stretched very thin. There just wasn't enough time in the day to accomplish all that needed to be done. I scrambled and stumbled when I tried to juggle ministry accounting, event planning, sermon preparation, donor relations, and various other ministry responsibilities all by myself. In fact, at the time I even had to edit some of my own ministry videos!

The ministry made great demands of me, and I knew I wasn't able to meet those demands on my own. Before long I began to desperately feel the need for an extra set of helping hands. In short, I knew I

needed the support of a ministry team. So little by little I added volunteers and hired staff. And for the first few months or so, there were no major issues with the new ministry team members, but after a while something strange started to happen. I was blindsided by the enemy.

What began to happen was nothing short of a satanic attack. The people on my team began to experience personal spiritual crisis. A new member would come on staff, do well for a few weeks, and then suddenly leave. That happened with almost *every* volunteer or staff member. The people wouldn't last long; he or she would just up and leave! Unfortunately I don't mean the people just stopped volunteering or working in the ministry. I mean that they would completely disconnect from the church and the Lord Himself. They would backslide and fall away from the faith altogether. Whether as a result of sin, bitterness, or mere exhaustion, my team members would simply give up, give out, and go away.

Being a bit naïve, I thought at first it was just a coincidence. But after the pattern became noticeable, I became deeply concerned. It was uncanny. There were no warning signs that I was able to see. Team

members would be doing well for a few weeks and then rapidly regress to spiritual defeat—one by one and at almost routine intervals. And it affected almost everyone, from my right-hand representatives to the volunteer camera crew.

The number of people from my ministry who would walk away from the Lord was staggering, confusing, and devastating. Over a dreary period of a couple years the ministry seemed to have a revolving door and constantly changing staff. The spiritual failure rate was so abnormal and so obvious that pastors began to warn their members to stay away from me. Fellow believers became suspicious of me, and some likened me to a cult leader. People began to speak ill of me, and that was unbelievably discouraging. All at once I felt the profound pain of losing fellow believers, the embarrassment of being labeled a false teacher, and the guilt of blaming myself for all of it.

I was crushed. The issue had me more confused than anybody else. A never-ending deluge of self-afflicting questions busied my weary mind: What am I doing wrong? What am I missing? Will this problem continue for long?

Searching for an explanation, I contemplated

myself into deep sadness. What started as a positive time of growth and breakthrough in ministry ended up being a time of heavy, inner spiritual warfare. Hoping to find a clue, I obsessed over every detail. I wondered, "Is it what I teach that's causing so many to fall away from the faith?" But I couldn't recall teaching anything that could be labeled false or even unorthodox. I prayed earnestly, studied diligently, and pondered deeply, but I just couldn't figure out what was happening. So naturally I continued to blame myself and think I was an inept spiritual leader.

WE MUST PREPARE FOR WARFARE

My questioning and analyzing continued until, on what seemed to be a random and insignificant day, I received a phone call from a friend who was a fellow minister of the gospel. He had called just to touch base and say hello. We carried on a typical phone conversation: "How are you? What have you been up to? How's the ministry? How's the family?" But the shallow conversation came to an abrupt end when my friend, I'm sure by the Spirit, picked up on the

fact that something was troubling me. Hearing through my upbeat tone, he became stern with me and asked, "Diga [that's what my friends call me], what's going on? What's wrong?"

Embarrassed by the fact that my ministry had seen so many fall away from the faith, I cringed when he pressed me for an answer. Up until that point I hadn't really spoken to anyone except the Lord about the issue. Actually nobody had even asked me about it. Some gossiped about the situation, but no one approached me personally about the matter—not to offer help, not to pray, not even to ask what was going on.

But before I could offer an explanation to my friend, he boldly and very directly asked, "Have you noticed that a lot of your team members and volunteers end up falling away from the faith?" Thinking my friend was going to scold me for being a poor spiritual leader, I replied unenthusiastically in the affirmative. But though he was blunt, my friend didn't attack me or shame me. He just told me exactly what I needed to hear and how I needed to hear it. He spoke something along the lines of, "Diga, your right-hand guys keep falling away from the faith because you're not preparing them for spiritual

warfare. Once someone steps in to help in your ministry, they are stepping into a greater sphere of influence and therefore a greater level of demonic resistance. They become a spiritual target when they stand by your side in ministry. You're a target of the enemy, and if the enemy can't get you, he'll get them."

I knew his words to be true, for they made sense of all that was happening in the ministry. As a matter of fact, I am convinced that what he spoke to me was a revelation given by the Holy Spirit. Upon hearing his insightful words, I felt awakened, alerted. The enemy's tactics had been exposed, and now that I knew the root cause of the problem, I knew exactly how to address the issue. I was energized with a new-found zeal to face the problem directly. In a single moment I was both unburdened and equipped.

After thanking my friend for being obedient to the Lord, I was diligent to apply what God had revealed. Soon after that conversation I became more selective in the way I chose ministry team members and began to prepare newcomers more thoroughly. As a team we are more mindful of the enemy's tactics than we ever were before. The issue has been resolved, and now the ministry maintains a strong, faithful core.

Though today I am no longer under the weight of self-blame, I must acknowledge my embarrassing lack of discernment. Looking back on the problem, the solution is painfully obvious. My regret, however, is overshadowed by my determination to do better. The inescapable reality is, I admit, that I was being naïve in not considering hell's strategic plot against the ministry. I was even more naïve to leave unconsidered the reality that the enemy would attack those around me. Honestly I underestimated the enemy. And so now, having learned a difficult lesson from experience, I write to you this important word of caution: demons sometimes succeed. They can potentially succeed against *any* believer.

An aspect of human nature that compromises our effectiveness is a self-assuring denial that causes us to believe we are unstoppable and without weaknesses. Ask any believer whether or not he plans to follow Christ for the rest of his earthly life, and you will likely receive an emphatic, almost indignant, affirmation of wholehearted devotion. Every true believer *intends* to follow Christ all the way to heaven. Thinking compromise can happen only to the other guy, no Christian hopes or plans to become a casualty of spiritual warfare.

Unfortunately it is exactly that kind of denial that subjects one to devastating vulnerability. Tragedy, we imagine, is what happens to other people. We aim to distance ourselves from the negative by refusing to believe that anything bad could ever happen to us. While we should not embrace anxiety and fear, we have to be realistic about the Christian life. Not only is it true that demons sometimes succeed in their endeavors, it's also true that you are capable of spiritual failure.

Consider Judas. Whatever your opinions about the mind-bending free will versus predestination paradox, the Bible makes it very clear that Judas succumbed to satanic influence.

> Then Satan entered into Judas, called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve. He went and discussed with the chief priests and captains how he might betray Him to them. They were glad and agreed to give him money. He fully consented and searched for an opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the crowds.
>
> —LUKE 22:3–6

Satan's pitiful attempt to enslave Christ to the power of the grave ultimately backfired and set the stage for Jesus's glorious resurrection. No demon in all of hell could have predicted such a dramatic plot

twist. But Judas became a casualty in the spiritual war because he was clueless about his own susceptibility to demonic influence.

Take a moment to ponder Judas's fall from grace. He wasn't always a villain. Judas was personally discipled, face to face, by Christ. Judas was given power to heal the sick, raise the dead, and even drive out demonic spirits. Judas was taught revelation from the very mouth of Jesus.

Think of the many world-famous preachers who have fallen into sin. Think of King David's seduction, Peter's denial of Christ, Noah's drunkenness, and Samson's lust. All of us are vulnerable. Do not become a demon's success story. Do not become a trophy on hell's wall. Avoid the snare of overconfidence, walk in reverent humility, and be mindful of this tragedy: demons sometimes succeed.

21

Demons Want to Destroy Your Faith

Troops, your goal is to rob the believer of his trust in God. Take his faith, and you have cut his divine supply line. Without faith, the believer cannot communicate with God or receive anything that heaven offers. The destruction of faith is an essential blockade.

—SATAN

WHAT EXACTLY DO demons consider a success? It's simple. Demons succeed whenever they can prevent or destroy faith. If you know what your enemy wants, you'll be better equipped to identify and nullify his assaults.

Destroying a believer's faith is, of course, not Satan's only ambition, but it is a strategic target. He knows that without faith, we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6). Without faith, we cannot receive from God or properly represent Him. That is why hell makes it a priority to prevent people from coming to faith and remaining in faith. Every one of their tactics is designed to ultimately cause us to repeat hell's rebellion through a life of sin. God wills none to perish (2 Pet. 3:9), and Satan wills all to perish (John 10:10). Faith is your freedom, and Satan's great ambition is to see mankind enslaved to sin and under his dominion.

Paul the Apostle tells us to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12). As born-again believers in Jesus, sin is no longer our master (Rom. 6:14), and we have been given authority over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:17–20). So though we must still wrestle with the temptation to sin while here on this earth

(Rom. 7:15–20) and though we must wrestle with demonic spirits bent on stealing from, killing, and destroying mankind, our primary battle is against neither sin nor demonic beings. Instead, our *primary* battle as mature followers of Christ is the fight to remain in the faith, to exist in the new reality of the Spirit, where we choose to think, act, and live according to what God says about us and not what demonic beings tell us.

> Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life, to which you are called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.
>
> —1 TIMOTHY 6:12

Ultimately after all heavenly authority has been rightfully exercised and after the sinful seduction of temptation has been gracefully resisted, our primary battle is to believe the timeless truth that God has revealed in His Word. Our fight is a fight to remain steadfast in faith.

Demons want to take your influence, joy, power, evangelism, prayer life, worship devotion, commitment to God's Word, and calling. In order to do that, they simply need to take your faith. Your faith is their prize, the spoils of spiritual warfare. If

they can take your faith, they can take it all. They can take your holiness, your peace, your joy, your legacy because it is only by faith that we can walk in holiness, live in divine peace, experience supernatural joy, or leave a godly legacy.

I am *not* of the belief that our life's goal should be to make a great name for ourselves. We live for Christ, for His glory, and not for ourselves. But when I write of legacy, I am referring to the way we participated in God's work to reveal His glory generationally.

Now, let me ask you this question, and I want you to pause before you answer it: Have you truly considered the value of your faith?

Think about this: I have four great-grandparents. That's four destinies that have contributed to who I am today. For the most part, my ancestors came to the United States from Mexico. One part of my family was a sort of "arms dealer" to Pancho Villa during the Mexican Revolution. My great-grandfather was a famous musician and band director. And, as I have written, unfortunately some of my family members held an influential place in the occult.

Some of my relatives came from a life of wealth, influence, and politics. And some of my family came

from poverty. I could write paragraphs on what is to me a very interesting family history. I can trace my family's spiritual journey back to key, pivotal moments. For example, my great-great grandmother, Mama Paulita, crossed the desert into the United States with little else than her family and her faith in Christ. How she made it through the rough terrain and into the land of promise is itself a miraculous story, but I won't go into that here.

Moving on from my great-great grandparents and my great-grandparents, I can then trace how my family's faith was passed down through my grandparents. They are the ones who gave me my Pentecostal roots; in fact, they were actually kicked out of their church for receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the gift of speaking in tongues. They received the truth about the Holy Spirit from my aunt (the same woman I called after my demonic dream). She was filled with the Holy Spirit after watching programs on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, a network on which I now regularly minister.

After being kicked out of their church, my grandparents found a small church in Maywood, California, and began to attend regularly. That church, now called Praise Chapel, is where my

parents found the Lord, met, and married. I'm a fifth-generation believer and a third-generation preacher. My grandparents were missionaries to Russia. My parents are pastors. My brother is a preacher, and my sister-in-law is by his side in ministry. My brother-in-law pastors a church with my sister. I have several uncles, aunts, cousins, and other relatives who are in ministry. That is the fruit of faith. But at some point someone had to be the first in our family to take a stand for Christ.

This too can be your legacy. Perhaps it doesn't look that way to you now. If right now it looks as though your family will never follow Christ, be encouraged. You can be the first in what will become a heritage of faith. Our faith is our connection with God, yes, but it is also the connection for countless more. This is why demonic beings want your faith.

Think about it. Why do demonic spirits attack believers? Demons place a high value on you because you do not represent just yourself—you represent many people. Your obedience to God goes beyond your individual life. The more you give in to demonic attacks, the more people they can keep from discovering the truth through you.

THE HOPE OF NATIONS

Jesus is the hope of the nations, and the ministry of the gospel is the supernatural means by which that hope is delivered. God knows the power of the gospel. Many believers know the power of the gospel. But Satan and his demons definitely know the power of the gospel.

Wherever the gospel goes, sin's captives are liberated and the deceived are set free. The gospel is infused with God's power to save. The gospel is light in darkness, hope in despair. God's plan of global redemption is spearheaded by this powerful, potent, and piercing message.

> For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"
>
> —ROMANS 10:13–15, NLT

God chose not to send magnificent angelic beings as His messengers of hope. He chose to send us. He chose to send you. In His wisdom He saw fit to send

the redeemed as messengers of redemption. He chose to use the declaration of the gospel as the primary means of heaven's advancement.

> Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe.
>
> —1 CORINTHIANS 1:21, NLT

Hell-bound souls are intercepted and rerouted by declarations of the gospel. You are called to disrupt and derail the plans of hell. As the masses wander in deception, unaware that their steps are leading them to a pit, they are confronted by our urgent and loving cries to turn to Jesus.

Anyone who believes on Jesus will be gloriously and completely saved. But how will they call upon Jesus if they do not hear of their need to do so? And how will they hear of this need if there are no declarers of truth?

You see, God's plan calls for the participation of every believer. Global redemption is achieved through a collective of individual obedience. When you preach the gospel, whether in word or in deed and whether or not you are a pastor or minister, you are joining your obedience with that of believers from all over

the world. It is this conjoined movement, as one unified body, that brings the multiplication of hope.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
—MATTHEW 28:19, NLT

God does not desire membership; He desires discipleship. Membership is based upon addition whereas discipleship will always lead to multiplication. Multiplication is a hallmark of the nature of God's work upon the earth. He is into abundance. He is into blessing. He is into growth.

From God's command for man to be fruitful and multiply in Genesis to Jesus's teaching on sowing and reaping, we see throughout Scripture that God's plans call for exponential growth—leaps, not steps. This is why Jesus calls us to make disciples. Members participate, but disciples duplicate. Christ poured Himself into His disciples, and in so doing He replicated Himself within them. Then they went and did the same. The results were explosive. Out of the very place Christ was crucified came a divine movement that shook the nations.

So how does Satan view the propagation of the gospel message? He knows the gospel establishes the

kingdom of God within the hearts of men and, therefore, the dominion of God within the earth. And if divine dominion has been established then God's will is being accomplished. Everything Satan seeks to accomplish is shattered to pieces wherever the gospel is preached.

Satan cannot remove the power from the gospel message, so he seeks to remove the message from your mouth. Furthermore, he seeks to remove you from your divine position; He seeks to cause you to fall away. If God accomplishes His purposes through multiplication and addition, then Satan counteracts with division and subtraction. Satan desires to divide the church and remove its members.

This is the celestial conflict for souls. Satan and his demons know the power of the gospel, and they probably know it better than most Christians. Every demon in hell knows the gospel offers the cure for the horrendous effects of sin and brings life to the spiritually dead. The kingdom of darkness is well aware of God's plan for global redemption.

May your eyes be opened to see the world beyond your own sphere. That God would remove the veil, the ever growing unawareness, is my heartfelt prayer. To that reality of the Spirit many have fallen

asleep. It's time to awaken. Open your eyes. See.

A WAR IS RAGING

Raging in the spirit is a war. This war, fought upon celestial grounds, is not over the corruptible. This war is for the incorruptible, the eternal. Yet despite its importance, the conflict goes unnoticed by most. Invisible but significant, ignored but furious, spiritual warfare electrifies the heavens and shapes all of human history. From the most powerful world ruler to the most innocent of children, each and every life affects and is affected by this war. We all, whether aware or unaware, are participants.

When you know of this conflict, when you understand what is happening all around you, your eyes will be opened to see. This is why demons want your faith. It's how they can win this war for souls.

We know that many are headed toward the furious fires of hell, and we know that Jesus is the only one who can save mankind from such a dreadful fate. But what we do not know, what we do not see, is that we impact the war for souls every day. Every believer, from the newly converted to the faithfully

seasoned, has a vital position on the battlefield of the spiritual realm.

Whatever you are called to do for God is set against the dramatic backdrop of this great celestial conflict. Your call counts. What you do for God matters. Your obedience toward God can affect someone else's eternity. And it can change the story of your generations.

Since he cannot stop the gospel, Satan is aiming to slow the gospel. And he is slowing the gospel by taking out the individual believers. Satan knows the power of one Christian life to multiply himself. Satan sees your influence, even when you deny that you have any at all. You represent many, because you have the potential to reach many.

The worldwide war for souls is fought in the everyday life of the ordinary believer, and it is won through daily acts of obedience. Your life matters. Your obedience counts. Fight the fight of faith.

In defeating your enemy, you will position yourself to fulfill the call that God has placed upon your life. And in fulfilling the call of God, you will be participating in God's global plan of redemption. That is why the enemy wants your faith.

God has called you, in one way or another, to

spread the gospel. Satan knows this, even if you have trouble believing it. His goal is to derail you from the tracks of obedience. The enemy does not want you to fulfill the call of God. God's plan involves the obedience of all believers, so Satan seeks to influence the disobedience of as many believers as possible.

Your life doesn't just glorify God; it impacts someone's eternity. You must fight the fight of faith. And as with every battle, there is a way to fight so that you win.

PART III

Opposition
Defeating Your Enemy

THERE IS AN important difference between resisting the enemy and opposing the enemy. Resisting the enemy is defensive warfare, but opposing the enemy is offensive warfare. In part 1 of this book (Origins and Order: Understanding Your Enemy), we looked at the genesis and nature of the kingdom of hell. In part 2 of this book (Operations: Exposing and Resisting Your Enemy), we exposed the tactics of the enemy and learned how to defend ourselves against them. We learned how to achieve personal victory in many areas, including fear, depression, guilt, condemnation, temptation, distraction, and apathy. Now in this section (Opposition: Defeating Your Enemy) we will

look at what it takes to become an active threat to the works of the enemy. This means that you will move beyond just personal triumph and become one who can affect the lives of those around you.

22

Demons Are Not to Be Feared

Troops, if we cannot distract the believer with sin, then we can lure him in to superstition so he will be too afraid to challenge us.

—SATAN

IN ORDER TO become a real threat to hell and a real help to others, we must be loosed from the distracting nature of superstition and learn how to

engage in true spiritual warfare. In the introduction I presented a caution about our approach to spiritual warfare and warned against the extremes of both skepticism and superstition. In this chapter I want to focus on avoiding superstitious thinking that can keep you from overcoming the enemy.

Before I go any further, I want to be clear. It is not my intent to be dismissive of demonic activity. My goal is to keep you from becoming bound to superstitious thinking that can make you fearful of casting out or confronting demons. If you can understand the liberating truth I seek to present in this chapter, you will approach spiritual warfare with the peace of God and not become inordinately concerned about demonic activity.

This section of the book is about becoming a threat to the enemy—defeating him. To become that threat, we must consciously avoid superstitions that make us paranoid about being influenced by demons.

What kinds of superstitions am I talking about? While doing my research for this book, I read a lot of material, carefully studied the Scriptures, and spoke with several people. Through those conversations and materials, I discovered that many people were living in fear of demons despite their vast

“knowledge” of Scripture. They were fixated on “rules” to keep demons from “attaching” themselves to them.

They had been told that they should pray when walking into buildings so demons wouldn’t latch onto them and then to pray when leaving so no demons would follow them home. In a few extreme instances some even came to believe that they should pray before loading every web page they visited lest a demon jump off the page and into their lives. They even feared rebuking demonic spirits lest they jump onto them.

They were constantly on guard. If they got angry, they’d pray against the demon of anger that may have entered their lives. If they came into contact with a drug addict, they believed that if they didn’t rebuke the demon they might become its next victim. If they accidentally touched a trinket from the occult, they’d think they had opened a door for an evil spirit to torment them.

Instead of living in the light of Christ, these believers were tediously working to counter every possible assault that could arise from almost any possible scenario. Though they were trying to remain vigilant against demonic attack, they were actually

giving demons too much of their time and living in bondage to fear instead of in the freedom Jesus purchased for us on the cross.

This isn't how we are supposed to live as followers of Christ. Of course, the Bible tells us to "be sober and watchful, because your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). So we should guard against temptation and opening doors that would give the devil legal access to influence our lives. For many of us, this means there are certain places we should not go. And obviously we should not participate in occult rituals. But greater is He who is in us than He who is in the world (1 John 4:4)! There is a difference between vigilance and paranoia. Vigilance in spiritual warfare is rooted in confidence in God and His Word and the authority we have in Him (a topic we will address in chapter 24). Paranoia is rooted in fear. Vigilance is offensive; paranoia is defensive.

If you allow yourself to become paranoid of demons, you'll constantly be looking around for demonic stalkers. We don't see Jesus worrying about demons, and we don't see the disciples living in that kind of fear. In fact, the apostle Paul allowed a

demon-possessed girl to follow him around for several days before finally casting the demon out of her. And when he did cast it out, he took only an instant to do so.

One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She earned a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved."

This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And instantly it left her.

—ACTS 16:16–18, NLT

Whenever you form a belief or embrace a concept, ask yourself this: "Does this idea help me better live the lifestyle of Christ that we see reflected in Scripture?" If it doesn't, don't embrace it. I want to see you operate in the authority that has been given to you through Christ. And Jesus definitely didn't waste His time on earth hiding from demons. So with the remainder of this chapter I want to address common fears about demons that hinder spiritual warfare.

FEAR OF UNHOLY OBJECTS

Some Christians live in fear of touching something that a demon has attached itself to and being influenced by a demonic spirit as a result. I am not personally convinced that demons attach themselves to objects. They want bodies so they can influence people. But those who claim demons can be attached to objects often point to verses such as Acts 19:19, which says, "Many who practiced magic brought their books together and burned them before everyone. They calculated their value, which equaled fifty thousand drachmas."

You may have noticed that the verse doesn't actually say the books were burned because there were demons on them. I believe it's more likely the books were destroyed to prevent the spread of the false teaching contained within them than because there were demons attached to them. Similar explanations can be applied to similar verses.

Having written that, I am *not* trying to say that demons *most certainly do not* attach themselves to objects. It's possible that they can and do attach themselves to physical objects. I know many people who have had experiences that seem to suggest this

is the case. I'm not discounting anyone's experience. But because the Bible doesn't clearly say demons attach themselves to objects, I don't believe we should live in fear of being demonically influenced by unholy objects.

There is a close relationship between physical objects and the influence a demon gains, for example, in the case of drug use. A demonic being may be able to gain influence through an individual's drug use, but that doesn't mean the drugs themselves had a demon attached to them.

Consider also the possibility that we are mistaking correlation with causation. For example, if someone participates in the ungodly and demonic use of a Ouija board, is it the board itself that brings with it a demon? Or is it the participant's disobedience and unholy practice that opens the door to the torments of demonic beings?

Am I saying it's perfectly acceptable for a Christian to use a Ouija board? Absolutely not! Its use is evil. But from where does the evil derive? The materials that make up the board or the acts of disobedience involved in the game itself?

Considering all the evils people commit every single day, are we in danger of encountering spirits

attached to almost every object people carry? As you can tell, superstition quickly becomes complex and tedious.

I often wonder why people are more convinced that a demon would jump onto them than that it would tremble and run in fear when it encountered the Spirit of God living inside them. When the legion of demons in the man at Gadarenes encountered Jesus, they became irate. They knew they were powerless in His presence and asked that He cast them into a herd of pigs (Matt. 8:28–34). Those demons immediately recognized who had the higher power. Still today in a battle between the Holy Spirit and any other spirit, the Holy Spirit will win every time.

Can demons attach themselves to objects? I believe the Bible is silent on the issue, but I'm not going to be dogmatic about this either way. To me, the bigger question is, if they can, how should that affect your life? If the Bible doesn't even mention it, how important can it really be? Should you fearfully isolate yourself and meticulously avoid touching things? Or should you recognize that God's Spirit is in you and that you are heaven's representative in the earth and have the authority to cast out demons in the name of

Jesus? (See Mark 16:17.) I recommend the latter.

FEAR OF UNHOLY GROUND

The same kinds of questions apply to "unholy ground." I don't believe dominion has much to do with physical places. Though prince demons can influence principalities (regions), that influence has little to do with the physical soil of that region and everything to do with the people of that region. While demons can have influence in certain regions and geographic locations, such influence isn't rooted in concrete, bricks, or steel; their influence is rooted in men and women.

Once I took a ministry trip to a particular city in Colorado. Nobody told me this city was permeated with occult influence, but the moment my plane touched down, I sensed a shift in the spiritual atmosphere. I felt a dark and troubling antagonism deep within my soul. I was able to immediately identify the flurry of demonic activity. I sensed a conflict in the air.

Surely that region is a centralized base for occult practice, but it's also a place that is highly

proliferated with churches and ministries. The darkness I felt was the heightened level of demonic activity in that area. There's demonic activity in every city, but in that particular city I felt it was heavier than usual. I was able to sense the demonic increase because I wasn't used to it being that intense.

But even there, even in that place where demonic activity is higher than usual, the demonic influence wasn't gained because of the physical ground. It was gained because of what the people had allowed into their souls.

Demonic spirits are more interested in people than in places. If the demonic being can gain influence over a person, then it has gained influence over everything that person affects. For example, if a demonic being wants to have influence over a city, it will likely seek influence in the politicians of that city. If a demonic being wants influence in a nation, it will likely seek to influence national leaders. If influence is desired in a church, the key would be to attack the pastor and leadership.

But I don't believe demonic beings are all that interested in physical objects and places—they're interested in people. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. Neither do we wrestle against sticks and

stones.

Can demonic beings gain influence in regions? Certainly. Can physical locations become "haunted" or "cursed" by demonic spirits? To some degree, yes (depending upon what those words mean to you). But again that influence or attachment has more to do with people than it does with property.

The key here is to not become obsessed with this concept. Just do as Jesus did—walk confidently in your authority. You don't have to constantly rebuke demons so they won't follow or attach themselves to you. Even if you do step foot in a "demonically influenced" region, do you really think that nearby demons have any right to attach themselves to you? They may attack you, but as we learned in part 2 of this book, you don't have to be overcome by their assaults.

RECALLING, RECANTING, RENOUNCING

Another thing I often see is long "deliverance sessions." These can last several hours and include interrogations of demonic beings. I admit that I used

to conduct these long sessions myself. I'm not saying that I'm against them or that they don't work. I just want to ask if there is a better way and if we see this process in Scripture.

"What is your name?" "How did you get into this person?" "How long have you been following this person?" "Who in the family first opened the door to you?" Those questions are not unlike the ones commonly asked in these deliverance sessions. Is it good to know how the enemy gains influence in a life? Yes. Is it healthy for one to understand how a particular door was opened to the enemy? Yes. But deliverance as it is often practiced today has gone to the extreme.

People apply methods used in psychology—"Let's go back to when you were ten. Let's go back to when you were five." The Lord is not going to leave anyone bound just because he can't recall a specific childhood event or past incident.

It's good to verbally renounce the evil we have done. But will God resist anyone who comes to Him simply because they forgot about a sin? Definitely not.

In the New Testament there is one instance when Jesus asked a demon its name (Luke 8:30). But even

in that account, Jesus expelled the demon only seconds later. There was no hour-long interrogation. Whenever Jesus or the disciples would cast out a demon (unless it required prayer and fasting), the deliverance was instant.

In their synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, "Leave us alone! What do You have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are, the Holy One of God." Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent and come out of him!" When the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, it came out of him.

—MARK 1:23–26

Astonishingly in Acts 19 we see that Paul didn't even need to be present to cast out demons.

God worked powerful miracles by the hands of Paul. So handkerchiefs or aprons he had touched were brought to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

—ACTS 19:11–12

The superior power of God and His Word gives us the advantage over Satan's kingdom. The practice of having long deliverance sessions doesn't necessarily contradict the Word of God. But again I ask, "Is there a better way?" I believe there is, and I believe it

is simply to hold to the loud and clear principles presented to us in God's Word.

Spiritual warfare, like the gospel in general, is most powerful in its simplest form. The rest of this final section will give you that simplicity. In order to stand on the Word of God and defeat the powers of darkness, you must understand your spiritual armor, your spiritual dominion, and your spiritual authority.

23

Demons Can't Penetrate the Armor of God

Troops, the believer who is fully armed is near impossible to destroy. To make your armed opponent vulnerable, simply persuade him to remove a piece of his armor. You'll be pleasantly surprised to discover just how easy it is to do so.

—SATAN

PAUL THE APOSTLE, a powerful general of the faith, advises all would-be battle-ready believers to wear the full armor of God. He details these important pieces of armor in the Book of Ephesians.

Finally, my brothers, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your waist girded with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, having your feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace, and above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the fiery arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit always with all kinds of prayer and supplication. To that end be alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

—EPHESIANS 6:10–18

Paul insists that we put on the "whole armor of God" because it is possible to be only partially equipped. Each piece of armor, vitally important in and of itself, is very telling of the enemy's attacks. If you understand the purpose of the armor, you

understand the strategies of the enemy. To leave behind your armor as you charge into battle is to leave yourself spiritually exposed. Even partial lack results in total vulnerability.

Our armor comes complete with both offensive and defensive pieces:

Defensive	Offensive
Belt of truth	
Breastplate of righteousness	Shoes of peace
Shield of faith	Sword of the Spirit
Helmet of salvation	

Let’s look at each piece of armor to understand its purpose.

THE BELT OF TRUTH

The belt of truth represents your readiness to go into battle. This belt also acts as a sheath, enabling you to keep your sword, the Word of God, close at hand. Every believer must have his sword close so he will be prepared to defend the truth he stewards.

Always be ready to give an answer to every man who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, with gentleness and fear.

—1 PETER 3:15

The enemy has spread his wartime propaganda throughout the earth, seducing mankind into a dull state of mind. Many have fallen for his deception, subjecting themselves to the degrading perils of what amounts to spiritual lunacy. So-called experts scream self-contradicting rhetoric and have become useful puppets of hell. The big lie they're peddling? *There is no truth.*

The world is being persuaded to reject the idea of absolute truth. "To each his own," they say. "What might be right for you is not necessarily right for all!" Speaking what to them sounds like love and tolerance, they naïvely fail to see the destructive and hateful origins of their demon-authored fiction.

Call it whatever you want to call it—tolerance, hedonism, moral relativism, acceptance, understanding. The evil idea is that no one has the truth, and, therefore, no one can ever really be wrong. The world will applaud your efforts to search for truth yet hypocritically condemn you if you say you have found it. The reason people do not like the idea of absolute truth is because if there is an

absolute truth, then there is an absolute standard of morality. If there is an absolute standard of morality, there is a definite right and a definite wrong.

> This is the verdict, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
>
> —JOHN 3:19

The one who stands for truth is, therefore, treated as a bigot and considered to be hateful. Nonetheless, as Christ's soldiers we must be ready with the truth, for Jesus boldly declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

If we do not know the truth, we are not ready to enter battle. If we do not know the truth, how will we counter the enemy's lies? If we don't know the truth, what do we have to proclaim to the world? Knowing the truth is what prepares us for spiritual war. If we do not study God's Word and hide it in our hearts, we are not fit to take the battlefield. Without the belt of truth, the Word (or the sword) is not readily available and the believer is not properly suited, so he is left to fumble around clumsily, aimlessly. As the believer puts on the belt of truth, he is readying himself with the ability to know truth and

declare truth.

Put on the readiness of truth.

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

There is a certain confidence that comes from living righteously. Proverbs 28:1 tells us, “The wicked flee when no man pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.” The breastplate of righteousness symbolizes righteous living. Doing what is right before God protects us from fatal strikes.

Nothing can decimate our lives like sin. Sin makes us more susceptible to demonic lies and more likely to be lured further down paths of temptation. Add to sin the ugly effects it can have on your mind, body, and emotions, then you can understand why the breastplate of righteousness is so vital.

Vital organs that are protected by a breastplate include the heart and the lungs. Obviously if those organs are damaged, the injuries would be far more serious than if the damage were to be inflicted upon, for example, an arm or a leg. In other words, you can be taken out swiftly if you’re not wearing the

breastplate of righteousness. The vulnerability caused by sin compounds the damage of demonic attack.

Contrast this sort of weakening with the near invincibility you can obtain by wearing this key piece of armor. It's the difference between strength and weakness; there is no middle point. On your decision to wear the breastplate of righteousness pivots the potential to be either a warrior or a wimp, a power or a liability, an addition or a subtraction.

How foolish would it be for a soldier who is fighting in the middle of a furious battle to remove his breastplate? We know that would be ultimately lethal. You would never do that, right? But, dear reader, that is exactly what the believer does when he compromises with sin. Sin makes it easier to believe the enemy's lies and thus to be damaged by assaults. Don't let the enemy tempt you to lay down this key piece of armor.

In celestial conflict it is always possible that some amount of harm can be inflicted upon you, but walking in righteousness gives you a boldness and a confidence with which you can brave the hostile struggle. Indeed, the righteous possess a unique endurance for which the compromising are in want. Righteousness in the natural amounts to resilience in

the spirit. Wear the breastplate of righteousness to guard your heart against the toxic punctures of satanic lies. Unrighteousness will lead to swift defeat in the spirit.

Put on the breastplate of righteousness to protect yourself from the enemy's assaults.

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

You may recall that deception is the enemy's most used means of attack. Satan's lies are like fiery darts or flaming arrows. When the Christian believes a lie of the enemy, the arrow has hit its target. And like a fiery dart, the enemy's lies have both immediate and lingering effects. They cause a sudden stinging pain upon impact and burn away at the flesh as they remain stabbed into the body. The longer a lie is believed, the more time the flame is given to eat away at the target.

To guard yourself against Satan's lies, you must equip yourself with faith in the truth of what God has spoken. If you have faith in what God has said, you cannot be convinced of the enemy's lies. This unrelenting belief, this conscious choice to trust in

what God declares instead of what demons suggest, is what is known in the spirit as the shield of faith. Right believing is a shield.

Roman shields were layered with extra material—usually metal or thick leather. It was that extra layer that enabled the shield to extinguish the flaming arrows. As the tips of the arrows cut into the material of the shield, the flame was suffocated. So the shield prevented the twofold effect of the fiery darts: it prevented the initial puncture and stopped the fire from inflicting its nagging burn.

As your faith in God's Word is raised, it deflects the enemy's furious rain of lies. The embers of hell may light up the night sky, but you find shelter under the safety of your faith. Ducking under the protection of your shield, you can hear the crashing of the arrows as they fall from the sky, but they can do you no harm.

This is what it means to nullify the deception of the enemy. You cast "down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). It is impossible for any of hell's fiery darts to penetrate the unyielding shield of faith. Every dart breaks, every flame is

extinguished when it slams against the powerful protection of your shield.

Put on your faith that resists the enemy's deception. Put on right believing.

THE HELMET OF SALVATION

Salvation brings about a renewed mind, and a renewed mind brings about transformation. The helmet of salvation is your renewed mind-set.

> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
>
> —ROMANS 12:2

What exactly does this new mind-set entail? It is the believer's confidence in what God has done through the miraculous work of salvation. The helmet is not salvation itself but rather the trust in it. So the helmet of salvation helps to protect the believer against strikes of doubt; it protects our confident hope in what Christ has done for us.

By now you have likely noticed a theme in the function of all of your defensive armor: they each

have to do with fighting and resisting deception. So essentially your spiritual defenses rest mostly upon your trust, hope, and faith in what God has done or said—and least upon your own strength. The collective power of our defensive armor is our confidence in God—what He has said, what He can do, and what He is doing. Nothing can threaten hell like a believer who is totally convinced of who he or she is in Christ.

Arming ourselves with the helmet of salvation is the culmination of spiritual readiness. It is putting on our trust in Him and wearing a mind-set of confidence in Christ's finished work. It is the most essential piece of defensive armor, for it shapes you at your very core. Proverbs 23:7 tells us, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."

Put on the renewed mind that brings about confidence in your salvation—in what Christ has accomplished.

SHOES OF PEACE

Now that you have been properly outfitted with your *defensive* armor, you can lay claim upon the Bible's

promise that "no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper" (Isa. 54:17). Your defenses are in place. However, the Lord wants to further equip you.

The posture of the overcomer is offensive. The defensive posture ensures personal victory, but the offensive posture helps to ensure victory for others in your life. Jesus promised that the "gates of hell shall not prevail against" the church (Matt. 16:18, KJV). Gates are stationary; they don't move. When warring with hell, we are primarily meant to be on the offensive. Offense and defense can be the difference between being a victim and a victor. When launching offensive assaults, the church is met with triumph. Therefore, the believer is to be on the move, on the attack.

The believer should neither lower his defenses, nor let up on his offenses.

So using the shoes of peace, we must ready our feet to conquer hell's territory. And what are the shoes of peace? The shoes of peace represent the preaching of the gospel message.

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How

beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring good news of good things!"

—ROMANS 10:14–15

Why does the Book of Romans accentuate the feet of those who declare the gospel? Why not praise the voice of the preacher? Why not comment on the mouth? This is because the gospel is most powerful when it is on the move. There is something important in considering together both the gospel and Christ's command to "go" preach that gospel.

When we obey Christ's command to "go," truth is given movement, and wherever truth goes, there is freedom. As it goes with spiritual advances, every step forward is taken with the gospel message. When the feet of a gospel preacher enter a place, the gospel is automatically brought along. If you are a declarer of the gospel, then everywhere you step is overtaken with truth. Wherever you preach the gospel in the natural realm, the same is being conquered in the spiritual realm.

The gospel message has the power to change families, regions, and nations. It undoes the works of the enemy. Wherever the gospel is received, it reverses tragic trends—divorce rates go down, moral progress is made, prosperity is invited. Problems of

racism, terrorism, division, and sin subside. The gospel is a powerful force. It presents the cure-all. It is a strong wind that brings about change wherever it blows. It is a cleansing wave that washes away the filth of mankind.

The Scriptures make a very clear connection between the gospel message and the steps of the believer. When Jesus taught about the rejection of the gospel, He didn't mention "closing the mouth" or "withdrawing our voice from a region." Instead, He makes a reference to feet.

> Whoever will not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.
>
> —MATTHEW 10:14

When you go anywhere to preach the gospel, you are treading upon serpents; you are invading the kingdom of darkness. You are storming the gates of hell. Sharing the gospel in the natural is to stomp on enemy territory in the spiritual. Peace is destructive to chaos. Truth is destructive to deception. The gospel is destructive to hell. Only in the war for souls is peace a weapon. With it we invade and raid the dungeons of hell and set the captives free.

Put on the preaching of the gospel.

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

If the shield of faith deflects the arrows of deception, the sword of the Spirit strikes down the evil archer. Believing the truth shields you from deception, but declaring the truth pierces the source of deception. By historical context we understand that the sword of the Spirit is not a long blade to be swung around aimlessly. It is a relatively short blade that is used for close-range combat and purposeful strikes. This is why your enemy chooses to fight you with fiery darts. Demons choose arrows, long-range weapons, because they fear getting close enough to be struck by your double-edged sword. The sword of the Spirit is the declaration of the Word of God.

> For the word of God is alive, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart.
>
> —HEBREWS 4:12

With the sword of the Spirit in hand, you are now fully equipped with the armor of God and ready to take dominion.

24

Demons Must Obey the Believer

Troops, all believers have the authority to confront and defeat us, but this authority only works in divine jurisdiction. Get the believer to wander from his jurisdiction, and you can rebel against his commands.

—**SATAN**

JUST AS I was preparing for a much-needed night's

sleep, I received an unexpected (and somewhat unwelcome) phone call. Tempted to ignore the relentless ringing of my cell phone, I glanced at my phone to assess the call's importance. Despite my lack of enthusiasm to talk, I reached out, perhaps by impulse, and answered the call. I immediately recognized the caller's voice. He was a friend and fellow Christian leader. I could tell by his tone that he knew his call was an imposition. He was sincerely apologetic but frantic and panicky.

"Hey can I tell you something please?" he asked timidly. Still trying to commit my mind to conversation, I answered, "Yes, sure."

He explained, "Well, I'm here at the home of a friend. I was ministering to the family who lives here, and this lady started acting very strange. She appears to have a manifesting demon. I think she is demon-possessed."

"What makes you say that?" I asked.

"Well, when I started to pray for her, she started screaming, saying weird things, and shaking. And she—or maybe the demon—is mocking me. What should I do?"

I pulled the phone away from my face so I could sigh without the caller hearing me. I was frustrated

that he was calling me because he was a Spirit-filled believer. Had it been a new convert or an inexperienced believer who asked me that question, I would have been more understanding of his nervousness. Internally I was praying for the Lord to give me patience. I mustered all the kindness I could in that late hour of the night, and I gently said, "Well, brother, you should cast the demon out of her."

He paused for a moment. "I can do that? Are you sure you don't want to do it? We'd rather have you do it. Can you come over? Am I allowed to do that? I don't need a special anointing for that or something? Won't the demon get on me? What about everyone else here?"

His frantic questions didn't leave me even a second's opportunity to respond. I waited for him to calm down. "My brother," I replied, "you can cast the demon out yourself. The same Holy Spirit who lives in me lives in you."

There was another moment of pause. His tone was one of both excitement and concern as he replied, "OK. Thank you. . . . But are you sure?"

My tone tipped slightly toward irritated. "Yes, my friend. You can cast the demon out."

After reiterating that point for about a minute

more, I ended the call with my friend. Then I began to think about what had just occurred. I thought to myself, "How is it possible that a fellow Christian leader doesn't know how to cast out a demon?"

Say what you will about my frustration, but Jesus Himself expressed this sort of aggravation toward His disciples when they were unable to cast out a demon from a little boy (Mark 9:19). I know that some demonic beings rank higher in power and are more difficult to deal with. But I was astonished that my friend didn't even attempt to cast out that demon.

Most believers have the same state of mind my late-night caller had. He was living righteously. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. He was walking with the Lord. Yet he hesitated to confront the powers of darkness.

If one is living a spiritually compromised life, then hesitancy in the face of demonic activity is expected. But just as the compromising Christian can be too confident, so the battle-ready believer can be too doubtful. I don't care what anyone says; the Bible tells us that "those who believe" the gospel message will be endued with the power to drive away demonic forces from enslaved souls.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the

gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.

—MARK 16:15–17, KJV

Whom will the signs follow? He who believes! He who believes what? He who believes the gospel message preached by the disciples of Christ. The *moment* you believed is the very moment you received authority over demonic forces.

Dear reader, you don't need to be a "demon expert" to be a threat to hell. Should you know the dynamics of spiritual warfare and demonic activity? Absolutely. But how much more do you really think you need to learn before you begin to exercise your authority over them? The ability to cast out demons and destroy the works of hell is not necessarily about how much you know about demons; it's about how much demons know about Christ in you.

While the "inexperienced" believer may not always be able to discern the difference between a genuine demonic manifestation and emotional hype, that individual still has the ability to cast out demons. Might the one who is unfamiliar with casting out demons do some foolish things? Of course. But his

ability to cast out demons is still there.

For example, I've heard of some believers who, while trying to perform deliverance, smack the demon-possessed individual in the face with a Bible. The *enthusiasm* is good, but the actual act of hitting a person in the face is not. We know that while there is power in the Word of God, there is no actual power in a book's leather, paper, or ink. We also know that we "wrestle not" against people or the flesh themselves. So smacking the flesh with a leather-bound book serves no actual spiritual purpose. You may even be able to expel a demon while using such silly methods, but the exorcism would have to succeed *despite* the foolishness, not *because* of it.

As believers grow, they will move beyond hype, bizarre methods, unhealthy fear of demons, and superstitious thinking. But regardless of any need for growth, every Spirit-filled believer has the power to cast out demons. How effectively they exercise that authority depends upon their spiritual maturity.

My caution here would be to tell you that if you are compromising in sin, demonic beings will be able to resist your commands. They may even retaliate against your attempts to expel them. However, I am compelled to remind you that there are limitations to a

demon's attacks on a believer, as I detailed in the previous section of this book.

THE BELIEVER'S STATE OF BEING

Authority flows from the top down, so you need to be positioned under authority in order to exercise authority. For example, a police officer has authority to enforce certain laws. He can command you to do many things, but the moment he commands something outside the scope of what the law allows, he loses legal authority to give orders. An employer has the authority to make demands of his employees, but if that employer steps into the home of one of his employees, he loses the right to make certain demands. Government leaders have the authority to enact laws upon their citizens, but the moment those leaders step foot outside sovereign soil, they lack the authority to command the people of that different country. If you want spiritual authority, then you need to remain in your spiritual place of authority. Once you step out of the spirit, you step outside your jurisdiction.

Speaking analogously, a police officer with a

California badge can't enforce the laws of Florida. A police officer with a US badge cannot enforce American laws in the country of Japan. It doesn't matter if you have a badge if that badge isn't used in your place of influence. Jurisdiction is the key to having authority.

In the spiritual realm for the believer jurisdiction isn't found in a physical place—it's found in a state of being. The believer has jurisdiction in the state of righteousness, in the state of peace, in the state of faith, and so on. When you live a lifestyle of compromise (the state of unrighteousness), you step out of the state in which you have dominion. You don't lose your badge (your authority), but you do leave the state where that badge works.

How can you command a spirit of perversion to leave when you're in the state of perversion? How can you rebuke a spirit of fear when you live in the state of fear? When you leave your jurisdiction, it's not that you don't have authority; it's that you're walking in the wrong state.

When you walk in holiness, everywhere you go is God's dominion—and when you live in dominion, your authority works to its fullest. Simply put, this dominion, this full realization of authority, is found in

the state of submission to the Lord. Our authority is fully realized in submission to God. And that submission to God precedes our ability to resist the enemy.

> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
>
> —JAMES 4:7, ESV

God's authority upon you will always work when you're living in the right state of being. This is why you can have authority everywhere you go: dominion goes with you! Your authority over fear works in the jurisdiction of faith. Your authority over demonic beings works in the jurisdiction of righteous living, and so on. The key is in remaining in the right jurisdiction.

25

Demons Must Submit to God's Word

Troops, all believers have the ability to confront and defeat us. But not every believer knows this. It's best to keep it this way through relentless deception.

—SATAN

JUST AS THE police officer needs to be in the right jurisdiction for his authority to work, he also needs

laws to give him authority. A police officer cannot legally command you to empty your bank account and hand over your finances. In that case he would be acting outside the law. When commands are made outside the law, the recipient of those commands is free to ignore them. But when a command is given within the law, it must be obeyed.

The same is true in spiritual warfare. The believer's authority comes from the laws of God, which are found in His Word. We can claim every word God has spoken about our authority to resist the forces of darkness and enforce His Word—His laws—through prayer. Demons must obey God's Word; therefore, whenever we declare His laws or promises in prayer, all demonic interference with anything God has promised must cease.

When you are living in the state of dominion and are exercising your authority according to the law (the Word), your prayers are affecting the demonic realm. If demonic beings do not respond to your prayerful commands, force will be used upon them. Indeed, demons may at times resist (Luke 9:40; see also chapter 9 of this book for why this may be), and that resistance may mean that further prayer is needed. Daniel experienced this very thing:

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

—DANIEL 10:12–13, KJV

Daniel knew his authority ("set thine heart to understand"), and he was living in the state of dominion through holiness ("chasten thyself before thy God"). So when Daniel's prayers were obstructed by a rebellious demonic force, the prince of Persia, Michael the Archangel was released to war on Daniel's behalf. Daniel was doing everything right but was still resisted by the enemy. God will always send help at that point, though our prayers must remain persistent.

This persistent manner of praying pummels hell. It is the spiritual equivalent of pointing a firearm at a hostile enemy and insisting on lawful compliance. When you declare God's Word to demonic foes in prayer, they must yield to your authority.

You don't need to yell. You don't need to shout. After all, noise does not equal power. You simply must persist in pronouncing the heaven-backed

promises of God. As long as your prayers are aligned and infused with God's Word, they have authority.

> This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. So if we know that He hears whatever we ask, we know that we have whatever we asked of Him.
>
> —1 JOHN 5:14–15

ENFORCING GOD'S LAW

The Bible says, "For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). This verse makes it clear that God has given us the authority to destroy the works of the devil. We can become a threat to the kingdom of hell when we enforce the laws of God and resist demonic forces through prayer. That means if you don't know the Word of God, then you won't know what you have the right to declare.

The Bible is the law book of the spirit, the basis of all spiritual authority. And persistent prayer is how we enforce the law of God. Prayer reiterates and enforces the law. This is why in this final chapter I

want to give you a concise and practical list of "laws" that you can enforce through prayer for your personal victory but especially as you intercede for others.

The law of salvation

> The Lord is not slow concerning His promise, as some count slowness. But He is patient with us, because He does not want any to perish, but all to come to repentance.
>
> —2 PETER 3:9

One of the clearest messages communicated in Scripture is God's goodwill toward all of humanity. In our loving and merciful Father there is a profound desire to see the entire world come to salvation.

Because we know that God's will is to seek and save the lost, we can pray against any demonic work that may attempt to impede the Holy Spirit's work to draw people to salvation. In other words, we can pray that demons are prohibited from interfering with the work of salvation.

Of course, we must account for human free will. Even though our prayers can silence the lying mouth of the enemy, some people will not embrace Christ, even if every demonic being has been removed from

their path.

As enforcers of God's laws, we can continually keep the enemy at an ineffective distance from our loved ones. Just as sin and darkness can make it difficult for the believer to hear God, so our intercessory prayers can make it very difficult for the unbeliever to hear the lies of hell.

You can even continue to beseech the Lord on behalf of the unbeliever, asking God to continue to convict the unbeliever's heart. The more prayer you offer, the more opportunities the unbeliever will have to hear the gospel and the more likely he or she will be receptive to Christ's selfless offer of eternal life. When it comes to God's work of salvation in someone's life, your prayers can overcome demonic disruption.

The law of vindication

No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their vindication is from Me, says the LORD.

—ISAIAH 54:17

The prayer for vindication upsets the work the enemy seeks to accomplish through other people. God is the refuge and strength of His people; He will not let His faithful ones be put to shame. Those who take cover in God's protection will not know defeat.

When someone lifts up his voice unjustly against you or a loved one, know that your prayers—not your gossip or arguments—have the power to vindicate. When you put your situation in the capable hands of God, He takes the responsibility of seeing your name preserved and of discrediting your disparagers. When you or a loved one is wronged, don't retaliate; intercede. Go to God, and God will go before you.

The law of discernment

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for the common good. To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

—1 CORINTHIANS 12:7–10

The gift of discernment is a Holy Spirit–given

grace that allows the believer to recognize the devil's involvement in a situation. One aspect of the gift of discernment is the ability to see demonic spirits at work—among groups, against churches, within circumstances, and through people.

When you intercede for someone, your prayers can bring clarity to their spiritual eyes—and to yours. Prayer makes it easier to recognize demonic strategies. Intercession pushes through the fog and forces demonic beings and their hidden work to be exposed.

The law of spiritual synergy

> Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.
>
> —MATTHEW 18:19

The power of prayer is compounded in unity. When you are praying with other believers in unity, you have the authority to access unified power to help accomplish your spiritual missions. When more than one intercessor concentrates her prayers on any particular need, there is swift movement in the spirit. In joining the grid of corporate prayer, you intensify

your assault against the enemy.

The law of safety

For He shall give His angels charge over you to guard you in all your ways.

—PSALM 91:11

We don't understand why harm sometimes comes to godly people. God allows for both random acts in the universe and the consequences of man's free will. But we also know that the Bible promises that there is safety in God's will.

Your prayers for safety can stave off harm and demonic plots for injury. You can command God's angels, and dispatch them around yourself and around those you love.

The law of healing

The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But speak the word only, and my servant will be healed. . . . Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way. And as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that very moment.

—MATTHEW 8:8, 13

Sickness is often a direct work of the enemy. Your intercession can contribute to a loved one's health and healing. Just as Jesus merely had to send forth His Word to heal the centurion's servant, so can you send forth words of healing by exercising your divinely given authority through prayer.

The law of deliverance

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

—ACTS 10:38

Exorcism is a real biblical practice, and you have the authority to cast out demons. How does one cast out a demon? Casting out a demon is as simple as praying. Honestly, when you're filled with the Holy Spirit and walking in righteousness, demons will flee if you say such simple prayers as:

- "In the name of Jesus, I command you to leave this person right now."
- "Devil, I rebuke you and command you to let this person go!"
- "I speak to whatever demonic being that

> is inside this person, and I am telling you, in the name of Jesus, that you need to go right now."

Don't be discouraged if the demonic beings don't appear to be obeying. Remember, if you are living right, there could be two reasons that a demon resists you:

> 1. More prayer or fasting is required.
> 2. The individual is not really demon-possessed.

When you, the armed and authoritative representative of God, stand in faith to contradict the works of darkness, you have all of heaven backing you. Model the master and command the demonic spirit to leave. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, living in holiness (the right state), and standing upon the Word of God, demons must obey you.

ACCORDING TO HIS WILL

Prayers that are "according to His will" bring measurable results. Just as a police officer's

authority is limited to the confines of the law, so the believer's authority is limited to the confines of God's promises. The Bible tells us:

You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that the Father may give you whatever you ask Him in My name.
—JOHN 15:16

When we stand upon God's Word and proclaim it in the name of Jesus, we continue the ministry of Jesus in the earth today. So often we admire the spiritual mantles great men and women of God walked in, but pause to appreciate this: Jesus has passed His mantle to you!

These signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.
—MARK 16:17–18

Not only can you walk in the same authority Christ demonstrated when He walked the earth, but you will also do even greater works than He did.

Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me will do the works that I do also. And he will do greater works than these, because I

am going to My Father. I will do whatever you ask in My name, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

—JOHN 14:12–14

What does it mean to do even greater works than Christ did? What does it mean to operate in His name? It means that you have the supernatural power to back up the message you proclaim. This power includes seeing the sick healed and exercising authority over demonic powers.

Look, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing shall by any means hurt you.

—LUKE 10:19

The same authority Christ exercised when He spoke over the trembling minions of hell is yours to exert. You can deal with demons in the *exact* way Christ dealt with them.

What is the key to realizing the fullness of this authority? It's obedience. Commanding demonic beings is a form of prayer, and the key to answered prayer is obedience:

If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, you will ask

whatever you desire, and it shall be done for you.

—JOHN 15:7

And whatever we ask, we will receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

—1 JOHN 3:22

As you live in obedience to God's Word, you can become a spiritual enforcer of God's Word.

Conclusion

WHAT A SOBERING reality—demons exist. Dear reader, we have delved into the mysterious and intriguing origins of Satan, fallen angels, and demonic beings. We read of Satan's fall and the triggering event—the creation of man—that inspired Satan, a former angel of light, to seek to be like the Most High. We gained understanding of why Satan carries such hatred in his heart for God's creation, and we traced the conflict for dominion between man and Satan to the Garden of Eden.

That struggle for dominion is what, of course, gave rise to the Nephilim (demons) and the surprisingly structured order of hell—powers, principalities, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Because they have limitations, those demonic powers have

committed to organize and strategize against you.

But you aren't ignorant of their deceitful ways. You don't allow them the opportunity of an open door. Armed with the truth of God's Word, you deflect their assaults, which are grounded in deception. Because you walk in the light, they will fail to deceive, accuse, tempt, distract, intimidate, or depress you. And because you are sober-minded, you will not allow the enemy to take your faith.

Lacking not a single piece of God's armor, you lay claim to your authority as you walk in the state of divine dominion. Through prayer you enforce the laws of heaven and proclaim deliverance to the captives.

So long as you know the truth, understand your enemy, exercise your authority, and stand your ground, you will be victorious in this spiritual warfare against demonic beings.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

—1 JOHN 4:4, KJV

Appendix

Answers to Common Questions About Demons

In this section I want to answer some popular questions about demons and spiritual warfare. It's possible that some of these questions may have arisen in your mind while you were reading through this book. It is my prayer that this section will bring about an even clearer understanding of demons and spiritual warfare.

CAN DEMONS CAUSE SICKNESS?

In short, yes. Demons can cause sickness, but not all sickness is caused by demons.

However, all sickness is the result of living in a fallen creation. Sickness entered the world because of spiritual issues. But this doesn't mean that all sick people are sick *directly* because of their own sin. The blind man who Jesus healed is one example. He wasn't blind because of his own sin or even the sin of his parents (John 9:1–7). Sickness exists in this world because this world is a fallen creation, a broken cosmos. And in some cases demons take advantage of that. In this broken world demons do have the power to cause sickness.

This is not to say that there are no natural explanations for sickness in the body. Of course, there are natural explanations, because the body exists in the natural. However, if we look beyond the natural causes of sickness, we will see the demonic or spiritually fallen nature of the root of sickness. Where the materialist stops, the spiritualist begins.

This does not mean that we should dismiss the usefulness of modern medicine. Health is God's will, and anything—supernatural or natural—that contributes to the accomplishment of God's will within the earth is good.

It is entirely consistent to believe in both the natural and supernatural causes of sickness. The two realities do not contradict each other. Even Jesus indirectly endorsed the work of physicians when He was using medical practice as an analogy.

> When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."
>
> —MARK 2:17, NLT

Jesus acknowledged both the need for and goodness of medicine. But this does not mean that all sickness has a natural cause. Sometimes there is a deeper root because demons can cause sickness. Consider the following examples:

- In the Gospel of Luke we read of a woman who was bent over by a demonic spirit: "He saw a woman who had been crippled by an evil spirit. She had been bent double for eighteen years and was unable to stand up straight" (Luke 13:11, NLT).
- In Mark we see a demonic spirit who made a little boy deaf and mute: "When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was

growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. 'Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak,' he said. 'I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!'" (Mark 9:25, NLT).

• In Matthew we read of a demon that caused a man to be blind and mute: "Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn't speak, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both speak and see" (Matt. 12:22, NLT).

This begs a question. If demons can cause sickness, can they cause sickness in the believer? A more effective question would be, "Can demons cause physical harm to a believer?"

CAN DEMONS PHYSICALLY HARM A BELIEVER?

Demons face considerable limitations when they try to cause the believer physical harm. As far as what Scripture tells us, there are really only two kinds of demonic physical assaults that can potentially work

on the believer.

First, whatever theological implications there might be concerning divine healing, it seems that sickness is one way the enemy can attack believers physically. Though I do not believe that God's will is sickness, the enemy can cause it nonetheless.

Scripture doesn't seem to indicate that demonic beings make it a priority to physically assault the believer. But when they do attempt to physically attack us, demons must break through a hedge or wall of divine protection. Unless God removes that hedge or we step out from under it, a demon cannot cause physical harm.

We see in the Book of Job that Satan had to ask for God's permission before bringing physical assaults against Job's family and possessions.

> Then the Adversary answered the LORD, saying, "Has Job feared God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse You to Your face." The LORD said to the Adversary, "Look, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against his person." So the Adversary departed from the presence of the LORD.
>
> —JOB 1:9–12

Later in the Book of Job we see that the adversary, Satan, was able to infect Job with boils, but only after God gave him permission to do so.

(Side note: There seem to be more than one kind of hedge of protection. Perhaps these divine barriers are layered and penetrated under varying circumstances.)

> The LORD said to the Adversary, "Very well, he is in your hand, but spare his life." Therefore, the Adversary went out from the presence of the LORD, and he afflicted Job with severe sores from the sole of his foot to the top of his head.
>
> —JOB 2:6–7

As to the question of *why* God would allow sickness in a believer's body, I think the answer is along the lines of why He would allow anything tragic or negative to happen in this world. Sin is not God's will, but He allows it. Sickness is not God's will, but He allows it. He punishes sin, and He heals sickness; but He hasn't adjusted the governing laws of this universe to make them impossible. I believe there is a nuanced relationship between our free will, the broken cosmos, and God's sovereignty. God seems to place a high level of importance on free will, and I don't think we'll fully appreciate the

importance of our free will until we enter eternity. Perhaps it's also important to allow fallen creatures to exercise their free will. I don't fully understand how all those dynamics work, but what I do know is that the Bible tells the believer to stand on God's promises for healing. Our approach to sickness should be to try to rid ourselves of it—naturally or supernaturally—and trust God with the outcome.

Second, to cause physical harm to the believer, a demonic being must use a physical vessel—namely, an individual who is influenced by the demonic. Take for example a demonically influenced tyrant who martyrs innocent Christians. Consider also a deranged individual tormented by demonic beings who might carry out a senseless massacre. Also think about less morbid examples such as a spouse who commits abuse or an angry individual who might strike you. Beyond those situations, as far as the Bible teaches, demons cannot touch believers physically.

ARE DRUGS DEMONIC?

Demons are fixated on doors that help them gain

control over a body or influence in a life. So man's most carnal and base of moral violations give demons their best chances at entry. The Bible is surprisingly specific on this issue, as a little study will reveal. To follow the teachings of Scripture on this issue, you'll find it most beneficial to look at one word in particular: sorcery.

You will read that word time and time again in the Word of God. What is sorcery? It's the conjuring of evil for one's benefit. It's talking with the dead, manipulating minds, and interacting with demonic powers. It's hell operating from within an earthly vessel. It is to see within a different realm and to alter one's spiritual awareness using darkness.

You might be surprised to learn the Greek word for sorcery. It's *pharmakeia* (φαρμακεία), which means "the use of medicine, drugs or spells."[1] In Scripture *sorcery* is synonymous with *pharmacy*. So is medication also witchcraft? No. In biblical context *pharmakeia* was not always the same as medical practice. Context dictates meaning. The Bible encouraged the use of medicine, as Paul's words to Timothy indicate:

> Don't drink only water. You ought to drink a little wine for the sake of your stomach because you are sick so often.

—1 TIMOTHY 5:23, NLT

So the Bible makes an obvious distinction between medicine and sorcery. Scripture is not necessarily against drugs but drug abuse. Abuse is abnormal use. It is to use something outside of its nature or intended purpose.

Pharmakeia is the making of spell-giving potions that were believed to enhance and "open" the mind. Drugs are modern-day potions. *Pharmakeia* is drug abuse.

Why do you suppose that visions and senses of darkness are so often a part of the drug experience? Why is it that dark imagery and paranoia attack the soul? I can assure you that in the spiritual sense drug users are most certainly taking a trip. And for many, their "trips" become long-term or even permanent stays. Psychosis (a deep form of demon possession) and even death can result from the use of many different kinds of drugs.

Weed also has spiritually negative results. Those bound by its use often exhibit laziness, a character trait of fools, and this becomes a stubborn character flaw. Aside from the known health repercussions (be careful of the "studies" that deny any health

problems, both mental and physical), the spiritual ramifications are detrimental to the Christian walk.

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery [*pharmakeia*], enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

—GALATIANS 5:19–21, ESV

That's a startling verse when you know to include drug abuse in the context. Even more startling, the Bible also prophesies mass deception of nations because of drug use.

The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The happy voices of brides and grooms will never be heard in you again. For your merchants were the greatest in the world, and you deceived the nations with your sorceries [*pharmakeia*].

—REVELATION 18:23, NLT

So any "potion" that alters your state of mind and is not for legitimate medical use is condemned by God's Word. Drug abuse is a demonic sedation, a deception that makes one spiritually apathetic and morally weak in the conscience. It is an open door to demons that must be slammed shut.

IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN DEMONS AND ALIEN ENCOUNTERS?

First of all, by definition, all demonic beings are aliens, as they are not of the earth realm. But as for technologically advanced creatures that exist in the "material world," I can only speculate. (Side note: If aliens exist, even in a parallel universe, they would have to have been directly created by God.)

If you'll recall, in part 1 I told you of the origins of demons, Satan, and fallen angels. The intriguing history of demons is woven together with the threads of ancient history. This includes the history of ancient religions. While upon the earth the Nephilim, and possibly the fallen angels, had many curious interactions with men and civilizations. It is my belief, and some evidence of this can be found with even shallow research, that demons heavily influenced ancient cultures. We know that demons are highly intelligent, endowed with a vast amount of knowledge, and very deceptive. Those attributes give us good reason to believe that much of what we read in ancient accounts and narratives is a record of demonic mischief. Desiring to be worshipped and

capable of god-like abilities, demons were able to change the course of history for many people groups.

The Bible tells us that the Nephilim came to become "men of renown." In fact, in the ancient world these demonic beings were eventually worshipped as demigods.

> They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.
>
> —DEUTERONOMY 32:17, KJV

We can see the effect and influence of these demonic false gods throughout ancient history. Many ancient civilizations tell legends of having been visited by "demigods" or godlike men. Many people from the ancient world believed they were visited by beings that "came from the sky" or from certain distant stars. The beings possessed characteristics such as great strength, long life, unusual height, and even advanced knowledge. This matches the biblical description for demonic beings, not demigods.

Hieroglyphics, art, and various other ancient relics from different parts of the world come together to tell us of a time when mankind was, on a global

scale, visited by these beings. But we know that all such beings are liars, and the truth is not in them. They told men stories of stars, planets, mythologies, and even false creation accounts. All the while they sought to be worshipped. No wonder there seems to be such confusion about the history of mankind. They lied about their origins and the origins of mankind. Through powerful displays they persuaded men to believe silly myths. Anytime you hear of these accounts, you can be certain that demonic beings contributed to such deception.

Although if we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than the one we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

—GALATIANS 1:8

While claiming to be gods, they deceived the nations into believing stories that would form the many false religions of the world. They not only attempted to muddle the message of the one true God, but they also, through exaggeration and deception, confused the overall historic timeline. All false world myths can find their roots in demonic deception, and the ancient world religions are no different.

For example, we see that other "gods" (not "God") or god-like creatures existed in Egypt during the time of Moses.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the LORD.

—EXODUS 12:12

Demons are not beings from other galaxies, stars, or planets. They are from the spiritual realm, and nothing they say is to be believed. All beliefs, religions, and myths that come from their mouths can be classified in only one category: false.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

—1 TIMOTHY 4:1, KJV

Demons try to be worshipped as gods and often succeed. In fact, some believe that in the last days demons will once again manifest on a global scale. That may be the "strong delusion" referred to in Scripture (2 Thess. 2:11). Imagine how that would be. Visible demons presenting powerful and

spectacular displays. They could say anything and masses of people would believe it. In fact, they were persuasive enough in ancient times to get people to sacrifice their own children.

Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.

—PSALM 106:37, KJV

Even some Christians are caught up in the deception. Rather than calling demons out for what they are, they fall into the devil's trap and approach demons as if they really are what they claim to be. They believe in the facades erected by demonic spirits and even approach spiritual warfare from those perspectives. In doing so, they too are swept up in bizarre, almost cultlike beliefs. For example, some believers treat demons as if they are aliens from other parts of the universe. Technically speaking, demons might be beings from another world, but they are not from distant stars and planets. They would like us to believe such things and thus become distracted by strange doctrines.

So let's simplify the matter. All demonic beings are liars and seek only to cause confusion. They tell bizarre myths, make exaggerated claims, and have even founded the false religions of the world. They

do this because they desire worship, but they are not to be believed. Only what the Bible tells us about them is to be believed. We, dear reader, must never delve too deeply into the myths they spin. They exaggerate their power and their identities, and seek to mystify themselves. But only what the Scripture records should be trusted, and the Scripture tells us who they are.

WHY DID JESUS TELL DEMONS TO BE QUIET ABOUT HIS IDENTITY?

Jesus had many confrontations with demonic beings. Dramatic and powerful displays of delivering power followed Christ wherever He placed His purposeful steps. With simple commands, Jesus usurped from demonic beings the dominion they obsessively sought to keep.

Imagine what demonic beings might have seen in the spirit. To men and women who looked at Jesus with natural eyes, Jesus appeared to be a mere mortal, consisting of familiar flesh. But the demonic beings were able to see beyond that. I wonder what brilliant light may have emanated from Christ's being.

What telling mark stirred the demonic beings into such a panic?

Demons were able to spot the divine essence that Christ so regally carried. In fact, they made quite a fuss about what they saw in Jesus.

> And demons came out of many, crying out, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" But He rebuked them and did not permit them to speak, because they knew that He was the Christ.
>
> —LUKE 4:41

Why didn't Christ want the demonic beings to announce the truth of His identity? There are several possibilities.

Some theologians believe Jesus wanted to reveal His identity in a manner that best fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. For example, Jesus wanted John the Baptist, who understood the prophetic nature of Jesus's arrival, to note the miraculous signs He performed. Those miraculous signs fulfilled prophecy and were indicative of the advent of Christ.

> In that same hour He cured many of their infirmities and afflictions and evil spirits. And to many who were blind He gave sight. So Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is

preached to the poor. Blessed is he who does not fall away on account of Me."

—LUKE 7:21–23

Some say Jesus didn't want demons to announce His identity for the sake of reputation. Demonic beings, known by many during that time to be liars, were not the most favored sources of revelation. If His identity had been made widespread news by demons, perhaps many would disregard such claims. Or maybe people would have associated Jesus with demons or considered Him a prince of the demons. The Pharisees did just that.

But some of them said, "He casts out demons through Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

—LUKE 11:15

Another thing to consider is Jesus's awareness of the Father's timing. Jesus was so perfectly obedient that He never went outside the center of God's perfect will. He didn't miss God's timing by even a millisecond. Perhaps a demonic announcement would have accelerated the timeline somehow. Jesus only moved as His Father led Him.

Then Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do. For

whatever He does, likewise the Son does."

—JOHN 5:19

Whether you take into account all the explanations I referenced or are satisfied with embracing one, the fact remains that there could still be something we're missing. However, as far as I am able to tell, I think that the three explanations (though there are others) are the best available to us from Scripture.

Notes

17

Demons Distract

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Appendix
Answers to Common Questions About Demons

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Table of Contents

COVER PAGE
TITLE PAGE
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CONTENTS
INTRODUCTION
PART I ORIGINS AND ORDER
UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENEMY
1 DEMONS EXIST
2 SATAN WAS AN ANGEL
3 SATAN DESIRES DOMINION
4 DEMONS ARE NOT FALLEN ANGELS
5 DEMONS ARE NEPHILIM
6 DEMONS POSSESS HUMAN BODIES
7 DEMONS CANNOT POSSESS BELIEVERS
8 DEMONS WANT TO BUILD THEIR KINGDOM
9 DEMONS HAVE LIMITATIONS
10 DEMONS ARE TORMENTED BY GOD'S PRESENCE
11 DEMONS ORGANIZE
12 DEMONS STRATEGIZE

PART II OPERATIONS EXPOSING AND RESISTING YOUR ENEMY
13 DEMONS LOOK FOR OPEN DOORS
14 DEMONS DECEIVE
15 DEMONS ACCUSE
16 DEMONS TEMPT
17 DEMONS DISTRACT
18 DEMONS INTIMIDATE
19 DEMONS DEPRESS
20 DEMONS SOMETIMES SUCCEED
21 DEMONS WANT TO DESTROY YOUR FAITH
PART III OPPOSITION DEFEATING YOUR ENEMY
22 DEMONS ARE NOT TO BE FEARED
23 DEMONS CAN'T PENETRATE THE ARMOR OF GOD
24 DEMONS MUST OBEY THE BELIEVER
25 DEMONS MUST SUBMIT TO GOD'S WORD
CONCLUSION
APPENDIX: ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT DEMONS
NOTES